SÍ SE PUEDE! (YES WE CAN!): A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF STUDENTS' IDENTITIES IN AN URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE

by

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Communication

The University of Utah

December 2015

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Policy debate is an educational practice that researchers have verified teaches students an important skill set that is highly valued in today's workforce and communities. The problem is that this interscholastic activity has traditionally excluded students from underrepresented populations and those who live in poverty. In the late 1990s, Urban Debate Leagues (UDLs) were created to rectify this problem. UDLs brought policy debate to large urban school districts. Quantitative research shows that UDL students improve their GPAs, test scores, graduation and college matriculation rates. However, there is little qualitative research to support these findings.

In this dissertation, I argue that identity is what changes students. Students are influenced by many different identities that they are able to explore through the UDL program. The study asks two questions 1) what identities are offered by a UDL? and 2) what tensions exist between the identities experienced in the UDL and the students' social identities? Critical ethnography and portraiture were the two methodologies utilized. Analysis of the data showed that students explored three types of identities—debater, academic, and the Carlinville Urban Debate League. The findings also showed tensions between debater identities and student's social identities particularly race and class. It was determined that identity was the key to understanding the influence of UDLs on its participants.

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"You may not control all the events that happen to you,

but you can decide not to be reduced by them."

~ Maya Angelou

A common saying I have heard from many fellow academics is, "Life just got in the way" and this could not be any truer for my situation. I experienced many life-changing events throughout the dissertation process and at my lowest point, I thought finishing my dissertation was insurmountable. I did not listen to the voice inside myself that quietly whispered, "You can do this." Instead, for a time I listened to the voices of people who told me that I could not—that I was not good enough or smart enough. I let those voices reduce me. But, eventually, I grew stronger. I got rid of the negative voices and started listening to the positive voices that had been supporting me all along, even when I was unable to listen. Inch by inch, milestone by milestone, I regained my strength in myself and my research and writing abilities. I learned that no one could reduce me; only I could do that and I was no longer a willing participant. As a result, my dissertation began to materialize, and I was privileged to listen to new voices—those of the young men and women who participated in my dissertation to whom I owe a gift of great gratitude.

I have many people to thank for their support in making my dreams of earning a doctorate come true. To begin, I need to acknowledge the two positive voices that

stayed with me through the journey of my entire dissertation. One of those positive voices was that of my committee chair, Dr. Ann Darling. Ann, I have so many things to thank you for. Thank you for believing in me when I did not. Thank you for your never-ending support and encouragement. Thank you for always reading my work and providing me with rich feedback. Thank you for knowing who I am as a person, a student, a researcher, and a writer. You are more than just a committee chair; you are a mentor, a role model, and a fellow kindred spirit.

The other positive voice that has been with me all my life is that of my mother. My mother fought for me, pushed me, and even needled me to finish my dissertation. She always believed I could do it, even though I made her nervous sometimes. Thank you, Mom, for being my everything. This dissertation is a product of your help and support, and I dedicate it to you. I love you.

I am also truly thankful for my committee. To Dr. Mary Strine, thank you for teaching me, challenging me, and making me a better scholar and writer. Thank you for teaching me not to put "the cart before the horse" as you would say to me when too many of my ideas would jumble together. To Dr. Danielle Endres, thank you for invigorating my thinking about ethnography, rhetoric, and performance. You taught me how to push at disciplinary boundaries and not accept the status quo. To Dr. Audrey Thompson, I thank you for setting me down the right path to choosing my dissertation. If I had not taken your class, I would not have known that I wanted to examine the influence of alternative programs on high school students. I also thank you for pushing me towards the "messiness" of this project. To Dr. Michael Middleton, you have been an invaluable resource to me. I thank you for always being willing to help me with all things forensic!

You are a terrific role model.

I would like to thank Dr. Avery, Dr. Marouf Hasian, and Dr. Karen Ashcraft as well as the rest of the faculty in the Communication Department for their teaching and support. Also, I am thankful to my cohort. While we are scattered far and wide, I thank you for challenging me to always do my best. I especially want to recognize Jim Bunker for his continued support throughout this journey. Who knew that we would become so close! Finally, I would like to recognize my dear friend Karmenly, who really encouraged me to push through the times I struggled and get this dissertation done!

CHAPTER 1

CARLOS: "BEING IN THE WORLD"

It's after school and Carlos and I are at CiCi's Pizza, an all you can eat pizza buffet. It is not the most intimate setting for interviews, but I like to feed some of my participants and this is their favorite place. Carlos is a 14-year-old Honduran freshman at John Dewey High School. He is tall and slender with black hair that is short and always gelled. He wears glasses, which actually have been broken for over a year now, until late in the school year when the school paid for him to get a new pair. Carlos is always friendly, polite, and helpful. When I think about Carlos, it is always on the tip of my tongue to describe him as the quintessential nice young man. However, in my head, my ethnographer voice says, "You cannot call someone nice—it's nondescript." But it's who Carlos is—he is nice, kind, thoughtful, and respectful to all.

This is Carlos' 2nd year in debate; he debated as an eighth grader at Winston Middle School. Over the time I have grown to know Carlos, I have found that many things make him joyful. For instance, he describes his little sisters as "the joys of his life." Carlos is always positive and encourages others to be as well. For example, when his coach and other students in the debate class are being negative, he yells out to them, "There's a positive way to think about that!"

In one of our earliest interviews, I asked Carlos what some of his favorite things to do were and he replied, "Well, first of all I would say go to church because church is a

joy in my life that I didn't have before. Ah, second, I would probably say reading. Third of all, I would say watching shows like Animal Planet like nonfiction TV shows." I commented on the diversity of his interests and then asked if debate made his list of favorite activities. Carlos was like, "Yes, yes, I just forgot!"

Carlos is a very polished speaker for a novice; he frequently earns speaker awards at the Carlinville Urban Debate League tournaments. His level of politeness and his ability to summarize and clarify arguments make him a strong debater, and the judges appear to listen to him. However, Carlos has a penchant for coming up with analogies and sometimes he comes up with some whoppers! At the beginning of the school year, he particularly liked this analogy about ants and bread and honey and how if you provide the honey, that will be the glue that attracts the ants to the bread, but they will get stuck. His point, at that time, was that if we bring in all these special resources to Cuba, the Cuban people would flock towards those resources, but they would become stuck in the Americanization of Cuba. This analogy was really a stretch and made little sense, but he loved it. Every time he would use it and I was observing the round, Joseph (his partner) and I would glance at each other and shake our heads. We finally both told him that his analogy did not work, which made him a bit unhappy, but he quickly came up with a new one!

It is important to my research to understand why students like debate and how this influences their identities. When I spoke with Carlos about what he likes about being a debater, he replied,

> What I like being about a debater, what I especially like, is being able to express yourself and you also get to learn new things and those things come in handy; like last year's topic about infrastructure and urbanization and industrialization, all those things came in handy this year because those things came like this to me (he

> snaps). I learned things about the world. Before I was in debate, I was just in the world but I didn't know what was going on. You actually do research and you find out what's going on.

I like this statement by Carlos because of how he states he "was just in the world" and did not engage his surroundings. But through debate, he felt it became possible to learn more about the world. This illustrates to me that debate opens the world for those who participate and exposes them to a world outside their bubble. It also demonstrates the building of a critical citizen.

In one of our interviews we talked a lot about Carlos's experiences at school. A good student at Winston Middle School, Carlos works to earn good grades. Although at John Dewey, he has no pre-AP classes, he does not complain about his classes like other students do when they were not in pre-AP courses. Carlos described himself as a hardworking student who "does what needs to be done." At first, Carlos had difficulty adjusting to high school level work and didn't quite earn all A's his first semester; however, he explains he feels better now about his study habits and is earning good grades. I asked Carlos what his favorite class is and he gave me three. He explained,

> My favorite core class would be biology. I love biology and it's with animals. My favorite career class would have to be my engineering class because there we actually draw and learn to be freethinking engineers; I learn to think outside the box. Like don't just think in 2D; think in 3D to imagine the things. My favorite other class would be debate because I get to express myself in that class. That's the only place I can express myself and how I feel.

Because of the tendency of students to drop out during their freshman year in Carlinville School District (CSD), I asked Carlos about the importance of school to him. He enthusiastically answered that school is very important to him. Carlos stated,

> Yes, [school is important] because my parents have it drilled into me that if you don't have school there's not much you can do in life because I mean if you don't go to school what are you going to do? You can't expect a job to land from the sky; you have to work hard to get what you want.

Carlos placed a high level of importance on school so that he could succeed in life. Carlos's answer demonstrates the influence of his parents and his knowledge of the reality that without an education and hard work a job would be impossible to obtain. Finally, I was curious to know what future career interests Carlos possesses so I asked him what he thought he would like to be when he grew up. He answered,

> That's a hard one. I have like two or three. The first one would probably be a lawyer because I love to express what I feel and help other people. I would probably be a doctor maybe because I like helping other people and I like microbiology. I would probably be a microbiologist to study them [humans] or a normal biologist to study animals.

By no means are Carlos's goals modest, but what I was struck by is that he picked occupations in areas that he knew he had skills in like debate and biology. Most high school students pick lofty career goals, but do not have the know-how or skill to accomplish them. In Carlos's case, he picked advanced careers, but he is able to back them up with having had success in the types of classes that would support his future career(s). I asked him what his future plans are after high school and he stated,

> I would probably the year right after we get out of high school I would go to college. I don't know which I'm going to go to. I want to go to an out-of-state one; my parents don't want me to. I would consider going to a state college or a community college first and then move on. I just would have to consider it.

All in all, I have a strong feeling that Carlos will accomplish his educational goals because he is so dedicated and never gives up. I do think Carlos will have some difficulty choosing how he will receive his education based on family needs and desires as well as how he will pay for school.

In another one of our interviews, we ended up talking about race and discrimination. Carlos's Honduran ethnicity is very important to him. He related, "I mean I come from Honduras so I have Honduran pride. I'm not ashamed to be from

Honduras; it's a joy for me, pride." However, Carlos expressed that he receives flack for being Honduran. He stated,

> I'm not racist or anything, but because I'm Hispanic I would say I've been discriminated against. For me, well I've been made fun of because I'm Hispanic and even other Hispanics make fun of me because I'm from Honduras. To me what that does is that it shows me that when I meet someone from a different race I try to be equal to them because I don't want them to feel the way I felt, so I am nice to them and equal to them.

Carlos's goals are to be equal to Whites and other Hispanics so that he does not feel inferior and to make sure other people do not feel as he does when he is considered unequal. I think the choice of the word *equal* is interesting because Carlos does not want to be the same as others because he has his own identity, but he wants equality of consideration and treatment. He wants to be assumed equal.

Carlos's Honduran ethnicity is very much part of his identity, but when asked more about his identities, he answered,

> God is my main identity, my second would be a nice person who gets along with people and I am free to be who I want to be not be limited by anything; I just don't want to be oppressed; I want to be free to help others not be singled out because I'm weird or slightly different.

Carlos reveals a lot of different identities in this statement and I think he makes them very visible. On the one hand, Carlos has a Godly identity which coincides with his wanting to be seen as a nice person who gets along with and helps others. In the same breath, he is very clear that he does not want to be oppressed or limited by anyone or anything. I almost feel like these are competing and confusing identities for Carlos at times. There is a need to be a good Christian and believe in God and be kind to others, yet there is a limit to this when he faces oppression from others and is made fun of for being different.

When Carlos stated that he was labeled as "weird" or "slightly different," it made

me wonder out loud, “Do you feel you are slightly different than other people?” He replied, “Uhhh not now, but in elementary school to junior high to early high school, I was singled out because I was weird, I was different. But now I've found my group of people who I'm similar too and just blend in with them.” Carlos’s answer that he used to feel different from other kids prompted me to ask him what made him feel different, and he said teachers and students at school had discriminated against him. He could not give me an example of a teacher, but he explained how White people make him feel, saying, “I'm not trying to be rude, I've been discriminated against by White people because they consider me less so what happens to me is I just try to strive to prove them wrong that being Hispanic doesn't make you less.” I immediately asked what he meant by being considered “less.” Carlos said, “Because they always consider me stupid; I'm Hispanic so they consider me stupid automatically, that’s how it works. So I strive harder because even though they’re White it doesn't make them superior.”

Being considered less is similar to Carlos’ statement of making sure he was equal to others. Carlos is experiencing the societal norms and stereotypes placed on Hispanics as being less capable than Whites, which forces him to work harder to prove he is equal so that his race does not make him any less than anyone else.

CHAPTER 2

DEBATE AND URBAN DEBATE LEAGUES

In an address at the Nelson Mandela Foundation in 2004, Desmond Tutu said, "Don't raise your voice, improve your argument." Tutu, a cleric and activist, received worldwide attention as an opponent of apartheid and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. While Tutu was not referring to a formal debate, his quote is important because it demonstrates that reasoned arguments are more effective than those reactions that lead to elevated conflict. In order to participate in social activism, such as the war against apartheid, it is better to utilize logical argumentation then shout from the streets.

Many people in the United States think that a "debate" is where politicians utilize stump speeches and take verbal jabs at one another in order to win a political office like the presidency. However, today's public debates do not reflect the richness of interscholastic debate. Instead, in our colleges, universities, high schools and even middle schools, formal debate is introduced as an important educational practice. Examples of this educational practice include Lincoln Douglas, Parliamentary, and Policy or Cross Examination debate, all of which are built on reasoned argument. The origins of intercollegiate policy debate began with the Harvard/Yale debate in 1892, but according to Fine (2001), the first debate actually occurred between Northwestern and the old Chicago University. Intercollegiate debate spread across the country rapidly and in 1925 was extended to high schools and in 1995 to middle schools. Debate was popular

because the skills debaters gain are highly regarded and include increased critical thinking skills, research and speaking abilities, and academic achievement.

Debate has waxed and waned since the early 1900s as our society went through multiple wars and school reformations. Sometimes debate is exceedingly popular and at other times interest has fallen off. One of the key factors in the popularity of debate is money. Debate teams require a significant amount of funding to compete at the local, regional, and national level. Only some schools can afford this and those schools are typically Ivy League (or well-funded colleges and universities), suburban or private high schools and middle schools. Thus, there are gaps in which students who can benefit from an education in debate and those who cannot.

The Problem

This dissertation focuses on how high school students in an urban setting experience policy debate. The primary problem this study is rooted in is the relatively limited understanding of how high school students engage in this particular educational practice and how they are affected by their engagement. Furthermore, research on students who participate in policy debate is limited because most studies on debate typically focus on the study of intercollegiate debate; therefore, there is little research on high school students. Extant research is often quantitatively based so while we learn about characteristics of debaters, we do not hear about their experiences. Another part of the problem is research on policy debate privileges White, suburban and/or privately schooled students. There is little research on underrepresented populations of students in debate at the high school level. Finally, and most importantly, too few of studies utilize student voices and experiences in their research; thus they are typically missing from

current discourses. Too often student voices are left out because researchers, teachers, and administrators speak for students instead of allowing them to speak for themselves (Fielding, 2001; Mansfield, 2014). Historically marginalized students lack a voice because they are too often the subjects of policies rather than playing a part in developing them.

An Opportunity Arises

In the 1980s, Melissa Wade, Emory University's Debate Director, began an urban outreach program in Atlanta public schools to teach minority, inner-city students to debate. Wade (1998) argued that an intervention was needed because schools were still separate and unequal despite more than 30 years of civil rights legislation following Brown vs. Board of Education. Poor, non-White students comprised the majority of public school populations, and persistent inequality and inequity meant that these students lacked a range of crucial educational resources, including access to information, exposure to a rich variety of teaching styles, and, more generally, a sense of belonging in relation to their academic institutions. Over a 3-year pilot program, Wade and two coaches from the Atlanta public schools created the Atlanta Urban Debate League. From 1998-2002, 16 more urban debate leagues (UDLs) were started in cities across the country—including Baltimore, Los Angeles, and Chicago—using funding from George Soros' Open Society Institute (OSI). To start a UDL, the OSI required that school districts had student populations that were at minimum 87% minority and 78% low income. Today, 24 leagues in the nation's largest cities have been founded, over 500 schools have participated, and more than 40,000 urban public school students have competed (NAUDL, 2014).

The goal of UDLs is to bring the advantages of participation in competitive policy debate to as many urban youth as possible. The skills associated with debate have been shown to directly and indirectly improve academic achievement (Anderson & Mezuk, 2012; Baker, 1998; Breger, 2000; Colbert & Biggers, 1985; Collier, 2004; Mezuk 2009; Mezuk, Bondarenko, Smith, & Tucker, 2011; Warner & Bruschke, 2001). For instance, it has been reported that participants of UDLs raise their literacy scores, and GPAs, graduate from high school at increased rates and matriculate to college more often (Collier, 2004). Other reports explain how participation in the league decreases the achievement gap, high risk or violent behaviors and truancy, and increases standardized test scores, attendance, critical thinking and the ability to research (Brand, 1997; Colbert & Biggers, 1985; Freeley, 1986). Adult participants, including coaches, judges, and other mentors, find that participation in UDLs is both transformative and empowering (Baker, 1998; Lee, 1998; Wade 1998, 2010; Warner & Bruschke, 2001). According to Reid-Brinkley (2012), UDLs are "tools of empowerment for educationally disenfranchised students providing them with the opportunity to develop communication and academic skills that increase the likelihood of their future success" (p. 80).

Identity Changes

Most of the literature on UDLs does not include student voices or descriptions of their experiences. While research on UDLs tells us the program is successful and has great impacts, there is little explanation of how and why the students who participate become so successful as result of their participation. Research on UDLs has failed to explain *how* participants in a UDL make these changes. By what mechanism do UDL debaters change? One way to explore why the program is successful is to examine the

identities offered to those students who participate because the performance of debate allows participants to take up different identities. Changes in identity could be the mechanism of change. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore how participation in an UDL influences students' identities.

My research questions are as follows:

RQ_1 What identities do students experience through participation in an Urban Debate League?

RQ_2 What tensions exist around the identities experienced through participation in an Urban Debate League and the social identities available in the broader culture of the school?

Rationale and Significance

A rationale for a research study justifies why it is important to undertake the research while the significance of the study expresses the benefits that may come from it. One of the rationales for this study is that the addition of qualitative research will enrich the quantitative research on UDLs by providing explanations from students about why debate is working in their lives. Also, this dissertation adds to theories of potential types of identities like an academic identity, which might demonstrate how debate influences student's views and schooling practices. However, the most important reason this study was undertaken is current research pays little attention to students' voices and ideas, and this study gives life to their experiences.

The significance of this study is threefold. First, the findings suggest an expansion in theories of identity that deal with academics and school. Second, the study uses a method that highlights the relationship between the researcher and the participant

that produces results that are key to understanding the identity processes the students undergo. Third, this dissertation focuses attention on a particular type of debate program and in so doing foregrounds voices often left silent by research on debate as an educational practice.

Description of Chapters

This dissertation is divided into seven core chapters and four short excerpts of portraitures created from the data. I began with a portrait of Carlos, which describes how he loves debate and experiences racial discrimination. This portrait previewed this introductory chapter (Chapter 2) that includes a definition of the problem, an overview of the project, the rationale and significance of the study. The Introduction is followed by another portrait included as Chapter 3. In this portrait, I explore a nickname given to Joseph, how he struggles to obtain a good education and how he sees his racial identity.

Next, Chapter 4 is the literature review where I examine research on debate and urban debate leagues as well as academic identities. Chapter 4 is followed by another portrait about a student named Xavier. Xavier's portrait highlights a campaign he wants to win, his academic identity, and his idea of the persona of a debater.

Chapter 6 provides the theoretical frameworks of the study. I examine theories of identity and the works of Stuart Hall, especially his theorizing about the interpellation of identities. Following Chapter 6 is the last portrait, Carminda's story. Carminda's portrait examines her home, debate, and school life.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 involve the methodology and analysis. The methodology section explains portraiture and the critical ethnographic approach being used. It also details the participants, their school, how the research was conducted and collected, etc.

Chapters 9 and 10 use portraiture to analyze the two research questions. Chapter 9 examines what identities the urban debate league offers whereas Chapter 10 looks at how the students experience tensions amongst these identities.

The final chapter, Chapter 11, explicates the conclusions drawn from the analysis chapters, broader conclusions, limitations and lingering questions.

CHAPTER 3

JOSEPH: HIS GRANDFATHER'S SUIT

Joseph is also a freshman at John Dewey High School. He is a 14-year-old White male with blonde, sometimes unruly hair, a pink complexion, and blue eyes. He stands about 5'9", and I find him endearing because he is in that awkward puberty stage where his face has not yet matured from middle school and his body has not leaned out quite yet. He is very bulky as he moves, kind of like a bull in a china shop. Joseph's personality is steady, even keeled, calm, and thoughtful. Joseph's likes are pretty simple; he likes reading, band, church, video games, Yu-Gi-Oh!, Pokemon, and of course, debate. Debate is Joseph's most favorite activity and he invests a lot of time into it—both in and out of class. He talks about debate nonstop especially with his partner Carlos; they are always trying out new strategies to trick their opponents. Their favorite strategy is to simulate cross-examinations where they try to outsmart each other. They get quite loud because they call each other "Sir" when they are trying to dupe the other one into saying something that conflicts with their side of the argument. They are so loud sometimes that their classmates make them go outside and practice, yet we always could still hear them. It makes me smile and laugh how seriously they would take cross-examination when a debate is typically won or lost in the rebuttals.

I came to know Joseph through classroom observations, informal and formal interviews. Joseph drew my attention for a number of reasons. First, he was one of only

a few freshmen in the debate class, and he already had debate experience from middle school! He debated 2 years at Winston Middle School, which meant that as a high school freshman, he already had a lot of experience. Joseph may be one of only a few of the 1,000 students CUDL reaches to have this much experience as an entering freshman. Second, Joseph was friendly and open to talking with me. This is important because I wanted to ensure that I never forced a student to participate and because Joseph was friendly, interested and approachable, this opened the door for me to develop a relationship with him.

One of the first experiences I had with Joseph was his being teased by other students, even though no one knew him that well. He was teased for being a freshman. Being teased for being in your 1st year of high school seems commonplace, and I think most students would say it is a rite of passage. The John Dewey debaters called the new freshman debaters "Fish;" a derivative of freshman. I do not agree with this rite of passage, but as an observer the only action I could take was to provide Joseph and his partner, Carlos, an outlet for talking about it in our interviews. Joseph and Carlos did not like being called "Fish," but revealed in interviews that the way they handled it was to ignore it and also they knew that the next year they would get to call the incoming freshmen "Fish" like they were. As long as they got to do it to someone else, it did not bother them that much.

However, Joseph was individually teased. Joseph wore shorts every day to school, but it was not until he wore shorts to the first debate tournament in which the team chose to dress up did he earn the nickname "Shorts." Dressing up to debate is not required by the Carlinville Urban Debate League or CUDL; their policy is come as you

are, but some teams dress up to try to improve their credibility with the judges. Although Joseph wore a button down shirt with his shorts to the tournament, his choice of wearing shorts went against the norm of John Dewey's debate team. Dressing up meant dress pants of some type, a button down shirt and either a tie or jacket. The problem, which no one knew, was that Joseph did not have any dress pants or pants that would have been acceptable. While Joseph liked wearing shorts, what was not well known is that Joseph's family did not have money to buy him the types of clothing John Dewey debaters normally wore. After the second tournament, Joseph began wearing a suit with a tie so that he fit in. I later found out that the suit he wore had been his grandfather's. I found this very touching. Joseph wore that same suit, shirt, tie and shoes to every tournament, even wearing it 2 days in a row for 2-day tournaments.

About 4 months into the school semester, Joseph and I had our first interview at CiCi's Pizza. I gave Joseph several topics to talk about and he chose to talk about himself and his upbringing. Joseph was born in a large Southwestern Metropolis, but as a child he moved around to areas in Texas and Wisconsin for his father's job. His family moved back to the large Southwestern Metropolis before Joseph started middle school, which is when his father lost his job. Joseph's mom is the only one working in the family and he has two sisters so money is very tight. During the interview, he kept saying his childhood was "fine." "But, it's fine," he would say. When I asked him, "What he meant by "fine?" He answered, "The fact that I still could have a roof over my head and still eat three meals every day and still have the basic necessities like a regular person or a regular family and everything, it's made it a fine childhood." I do not know many 14-year-olds who can be so pragmatic and not indicate that they want something more or outside their

family's means. It is as if Joseph understood Maslow's hierarchy of needs and accepted that one needs shelter and food and that having that is good—it's acceptable—"it's fine." Given that there are great disparities of wealth on the John Dewey team, I know I would have found it hard to not envy the other students who had more.

Besides his childhood, we also discussed how getting a good education is very important to Joseph. He states,

> . . . I've found it actually helps you in life because you do good in school the more colleges will notice you because you are being a good kid that has good grades. [This] will help me get a scholarship to wherever I need to go so it will pay for college and everything and it will hopefully get me a job that I actually like and do stuff that I like.

Joseph's statement is quite telling of several beliefs he holds. First, it is clear to me that Joseph's parents are not happy with their level of education and job opportunities or lack thereof, and Joseph does not want to be stuck in the same situation. He wants a job that he likes and where he does things that he likes. Second, being good and earning good grades is the way to earn scholarships is how Joseph views the college process, which is a bit naïve. Full ride scholarships are very hard to come by, and it is a difficult process applying for scholarships and finding the right college for you. It is not an automatic process that good grades translate into scholarships. However, Joseph is only a freshman and without guidance from his parents or more exposure to high school, it is easy to see why he explains the process so simplistically.

Debate is one of the most important parts of Joseph's life. He loves it! He got into debate because his middle school librarian recommended him for the team and as he says, "It turned out, I was really good at it." And, he was. Joseph and his partner Carlos steadily improved throughout the course of the debate season. At one tournament, Joseph earned a "Top Speaker Award." At the second to last tournament, Joseph and Carlos

won the entire novice tournament! It was amazing! I was very proud of them and they were so proud of themselves.

I was curious what Joseph thought about debating for John Dewey High School so in another interview we spoke about debating for his school and team. I asked, "What does it mean to be a debater for John Dewey High School?" Joseph's answer surprised me a little. Joseph stated,

> So to be a debater for the actual school I guess it helps me get on my teachers' good sides [because they think] "you're actually really good at this," and so they sort of like respect me because I'm on the debate team, but it also means I'm defending my school and everything; I'm representing John Dewey as a whole. Umm it really helps the school's reputation.

I was really surprised by part of his answer because it felt manipulative and calculating to me—two characteristics I would not associate with Joseph. Instead, Joseph's answer represented two sides of a coin with one side being about how he was seen as smart and debate helped him gain favor from his teachers, but on the other side of the coin, what it meant to be a John Dewey debater was about representing a positive reputation of John Dewey High School.

I also asked Joseph, "What do you like about being a debater? Joseph answered:

> I think the thing I like the most about it because being in debate especially this year and I'm in world geography and so learning about Cuba and Mexico and how their status is and everything really helped me because we were actually studying it and so I knew everything that was going on. But it helps me keep up with current events more that way I have more new arguments in case something comes up.

Again I was surprised. It's not that I had preformulated a correct answer, it's that my job with CUDL gives me access to survey data and when debaters are asked about what their favorite thing about debate is, "arguing, competing, and winning" are the most common answers. I really liked Joseph's answer because it stretched beyond the typical answers

to something more meaningful and academic. There is a pattern to Joseph's answers, which is he typically relates the question to academics and not the characteristics or components of debate.

Finally, over the course of our interviews, Joseph made some revealing comments about his race and identity. When I asked about race and discrimination in school, Joseph stated,

> I mean I never really thought about it or anything. I usually just say, "Yeah, I'm White." I mean big deal. Umm but I don't know what it exactly means to me because I don't take it seriously as long as someone is not making fun of it. I don't really care if it means something or anything.

In the same vein, I asked how does your race influence you? Joseph replied,

> I feel like sometimes at school people see me as a white kid who has everything and who like really doesn't have to do anything [and is] like super laidback and doesn't really care about anything. But I really see that as not true because I have had to work for what I want. I haven't really gotten anything just like on the spot. Other than that I don't think it really affects me. Other than the fact that people judge me on it.

I also asked Joseph if he had experienced discrimination at school. I already knew from my observations and informal interviews that the other participants experienced discrimination. I was curious to see what Joseph would say because at John Dewey, Whites do not make up the largest percentage of the student body. Joseph explained that in middle school he was the only White person in one of his classes, and he was discriminated against because all the kids called him "White Boy."

I expected that there would not be a great deal of racial awareness on Joseph's part because even though the schools he attended were primarily Hispanic, White students were still the dominant race and culture. The diverse student population did little to change White dominance. I also expected to hear some sort of interaction where Joseph felt discriminated against when he was in a minority position.

Joseph's voice is not very affective, and when I asked him questions about his race, the words he was saying did not come across the same way they do in print. For example, his downplaying of his race; his comment about not knowing what it means [to be White] because he does not take it seriously unless made fun of; and his declaration of not caring, for me, are so harsh and disappointing. When I transcribed these interactions, I was really shocked because I had forgotten the intensity of his words and his general affect.

CHAPTER 4

POLICY DEBATE AS AN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study is to expand the limited understanding of how high school students engage in the educational practice of debate and how they are affected by it. The study explores how participating in an UDL may influence student's identities. In support of the purpose and goal of the study at hand, this chapter presents arguments about the literatures that support the use of policy debate with all its complexities. Urban debate leagues, critiques of UDLs, and academic identity are also explored.

Debate as an Educational Practice

Debate is an educational practice and scholastic activity that has a demonstrated record of increasing academic achievement. For example, intercollegiate debate research touts the critical thinking skills debaters learn including: "research identification, collection, organization and assimilation, evidence evaluation, development of practical theoretical arguments and counter arguments, persuasive writing . . ." etc. (Rogers, 2005, p. 1). Also, public presentational skills and intelligent articulation are taught and debaters develop self-confidence, poise, and the ability to think quickly on one's feet (Rogers, 2002; 2005). Finally, students learn advocacy skills and social responsibility; these skills are developed through coming to understand sociopolitical issues and the ability to argue

and see both sides of an argument, which creates acceptance for different viewpoints from other people. As Bartenan (1998) explains: "debate fosters leadership skills of reflection, connectedness and advocacy" (pp. 12-13).

The largest area of research concerns what is arguably the most important skill set a debater develops: critical thinking skills. Similar to the description above, critical thinking skills consist of the ability to read, research, formulate arguments, write, and speak well (see Beckman, 1957; Brembeck, 1949; Colbert, 1987; Cross, 1961; Gruner, Husman, & Luck, 1971; Hill, 1993; Horn & Underberg, 1993; Howell, 1943; Jackson, 1961; Rowland, 1995; Ware & Gruner, 1972; Williams, 1951; Williams, McGee, & Worth, 2001). Other critical thinking abilities include comprehending abstract, large bodies of knowledge, synthesizing information, and scrutinizing the positions of your opponents (Patterson & Zarefsky, 1983; Sanders, 1983; Sheckels, 1984). Freeley (1986) describes the critical thinking process students experience as a debater in four steps:

> (1) to create an argument, a student is required to research issues (which requires knowledge of how to use libraries and data banks), organize data, analyze the data, synthesize different kinds of data, and evaluate information with respect to the quality of conclusions it may point to; (2) to form an argument after this process, a student must understand how to reason, must be able to recognize and critique different methods of reasoning, and must have an understanding of the logic of decision making; (3) the successful communication of arguments to audiences reflects another cognitive skill: the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly with words; (4) finally, the argumentative interaction of students in a debate reflects an even more complex cognitive ability—the ability to process the arguments of others quickly and to reformulate or adapt or defend previous positions. (pp. 27-28)

To engage in critical thinking one must enact and perform these steps during the context of a debate. These steps reveal the complex actions and interactions that debate requires.

In addition to critical thinking skills, research shows there are many other benefits of debate. The development of academic skills, mental and emotional maturity, and

academic and occupational achievement are also within the skill set debaters learn (Catterall, 2002). Debate teaches students how to think—for themselves and more importantly how others do (Infante & Wingly, 1986). Debaters become self-directed learners, which teaches them to take control of their own education and become lifelong learners. Additionally, students who debate perform better academically and end up working in positions that require high levels of reasoning and logic, as well as leadership (Colbert & Biggers, 1985). Furthermore, many debaters become politically active and engage in civic participation; this is particularly true for women and students of color because the skills learned in debate help them break through existing barriers to civic engagement (Bellon, 2000). In sum, it appears that all of the skills offered through debate could assist students with academic performance in school and develop important social and advocacy skills outside of the classroom.

An Overview of Policy Debate

At the high school level, three primary types of debate exist—parliamentary, Lincoln-Douglas, and Policy Debate. Parliamentary debate is modeled after the British Parliament style of debate where there are two teams—the government and the opposition—as well as the Speaker of the House who serves as the judge. Parliamentary debate focuses on quick thinking, logical argumentation, and knowledge of rhetoric over large research areas. The emphasis of this type of debate is persuasiveness, logic, and wit. Since the resolution the debaters use for each round are set 10 minutes prior to the round, no evidence is required.

Lincoln-Douglas (or L-D) debate began as a reaction to the extremeness of team policy debate. Mirrored after Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in the 1850s, L-D

is a one-on-one style of debating where students debate about competing ethical values. Some common resolutions are "The spirit of the law ought to take precedence over the letter of the law to enhance justice" or "Cooperation is superior to competition." L-D debaters are about values and the ability to persuade. Emphasis is placed on speaking clearly, logically, and fluidly. L-D debates are not necessarily research intensive.

Policy or Cross Examination debate is known as a research based type of speech competition where two teams are allowed to ask questions of their opponents during a 3-minute period. This 3-minute period is why this form of debate is often referred to as Cross-X or CX debate. CX debate is very popular on the high school debate circuit while parliamentary and most specifically L-D are not being practiced as much. CX debate is the type of debate used solely by Urban Debate Leagues (UDLs). It is examined here in-depth in order to provide the reader with a context for understanding the rest of dissertation.

First, in policy debate, there is the topic that all high school students debate from called the Resolution. The resolution is typically about the federal government and for the 2013-2014 debate season read as: "Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba, Mexico, or Venezuela." This topic is then debated between two-person teams from different schools who meet at tournaments where they are assigned to be one of two sides—the affirmative or the negative. The affirmative side presents evidence that supports the resolution, which involves building a "case" based on evidence, and the negative argues against that case by presenting evidence that conflicts or claims that the status quo should be kept in

place. Each debate is called a round and for each round the teams are assigned to argue a different side, i.e, if a team is on the affirmative for one debate, they will be on the negative for the second. This is why CX debate is also called switch-side debating.

The teams of students present their evidence in a series of timed speeches. There are two parts to the debate: the constructive and the rebuttal sections. In the constructive part, all the evidence is presented and arguments are made. This part of the debate includes four speeches and four cross-examinations. The second part is the rebuttals, which are used to explain how each of their arguments outweighs their opponents' and why their side should win the debate. There are four rebuttal speeches. Each debater delivers two speeches—a constructive and a rebuttal. Also, each speaker takes a turn asking their opponents CX questions and providing answers to the other side's CX questions. Table 4.1 on the following page is a list of the order of the speeches, which debater gives each speech, and the times for all the speeches. Policy debate, then, is highly structured; some would argue that it is too rigidly structured.

There are a few other aspects of policy debate that are important to this project. First, the 1AC, or the first speaker on the affirmative side, delivers a "canned" or pre-written speech that articulates the affirmative's case; all other speeches are written during the round. Second, the 1AC delivers her speech as fast as she possibly can at a rate of 300-500 words per minute. This is called "spreading" the hyphenate of putting the two words speed-reading together. Spreading occurs throughout the round because debaters want to get in as much evidence as possible. Each side must respond to *every* argument the other makes so spreading is considered necessary by the debaters in order not to miss or "drop" an argument. Third, everyone in the round including the judge keeps what is

Table 4.1 Order of Speeches

Speech	Abbreviation of Speaker Position	Time
First Affirmative Constructive Speech	1AC	8 minutes
Cross Examination by Second Negative Speaker	2NC	3 minutes
First Negative Constructive Speech	1NC	8 minutes
Cross Examination by First Affirmative Speaker	1AC	3 minutes
Second Affirmative Constructive Speech	2AC	8 minutes
Cross Examination by First Negative Speaker	1NC	3 minutes
Second Negative Constructive Speech	2NC	8 minutes
Cross Examination by Second Affirmative Speaker	2AC	3 minutes
First Negative Rebuttal	*1NR*	*5 minutes*
First Affirmative Rebuttal	*1AR*	*5 minutes*
Second Affirmative Rebuttal	*2NR*	*5 minutes*
Second Affirmative Rebuttal	*2AR*	*5 minutes*

called a "flow." A flow or flowing is a highly stylistic, short-hand way to keep track of all the arguments and evidence argued in the round. Debaters use the flows to prepare their speeches and judges use theirs to assess the arguments being made. The flow is very important because it is the tool that the judge uses to make his decision on who rendered the better argument or case. A team that drops arguments usually loses because their failure to respond is interpreted as agreement with the opposing side. Finally, a logistical practice that is changing very quickly is the carrying of tubs or bins. In order to have access to all this evidence, debaters must have a place to store it so they carry around massive plastic tubs. Some even use dollies to roll their bins around. This practice has changed greatly with the approval of the use of laptops to debate. Most schools are completely digital and have all their evidence in electronic form on the debaters' laptops; thus, for the most part, intercollegiate debate and at private/suburban high schools no longer use tubs.

Complexities of Debate

Policy debate has changed over its more than 100-year legacy and there have been many "debates about debate." Policy debaters have debated about what constitutes policy debate, the goals of policy debate, tournament practices, the order and length of each speech, how to choose a resolution, the introduction of the critique, and activism as well as variety of other aspects about what policy debate should or should not encompass. One debate, which has lasted since the 1950s, is whether debaters should engage in switch-side debating or SSD. In SSD, debate teams take turns arguing the affirmative and then the negative side of the resolution. This debate was sparked during the cold war specifically at the height of containing communism, when the following resolution was proposed to be the topic for that year's debate season: "Resolved: The United States should diplomatically recognize the People's Republic of China" (Greene & Hicks, 2005, p. 100). Many colleges and US military academies refused to approve the resolution because they were concerned that public speaking should be about "moral attributes of good citizenship" (Greene & Hicks, 2005, p. 100). Arguing for this resolution would not demonstrate good citizenship.

This debate about debate was sparked by a series of charges made by Richard Murphy that would continue this debate for years to come. Murphy's (1957) position was that "debating both sides of the question was unethical because it divorced conviction from advocacy and that it was a dangerous practice because it threatened the integrity of public debate by divorcing it from a genuine search for truth" (as cited in Greene & Hicks, 2005, p. 103). Murphy's standpoint attacked both the ethical nature and the pedagogical worth of SSD as expanded on by Ehninger (1958). Murphy's

accusations were not taken lightly by the nation's leading debate coaches, who felt they were being condemned as ethically irresponsible educators. The coaches offered four responses: a) Murphy lacked an understanding of tournament debate; b) SSD was a reasonable educational procedure; c) college level debate should be held responsible to a different ethic; and d) SSD was needed in order to maintain tournament debate. After 10 years of debate and a quantitative study of coach's opinions, whether SSD was a good practice, the controversy was put to rest by the finding that it was ethically sound to debate both sides of the topic. As for whether SSD was a useful pedagogical tool, this debate continued on for 30 more years, with numerous arguments made about the vast educational benefits of debating both sides; however, its pedagogical worth was finally accepted.

Besides debate about debate, two more relevant issues discussed in debate literature which include the lack of diversity in debate and the gender bias against female debaters. Stepp (1997) determined that in the 1980s and 1990s, debate teams were not reflective of the college populations from which they were drawn; therefore, debate teams were not composed of an almost equal number of men and women and underrepresented populations were rarely included. These conclusions were generated by examining the participants at the National Debate Tournaments and Cross Examination Debate Association tournaments and comparing them to the statistics of men and women and underrepresented populations enrolled in the general college populations. While there has been some increase in female and African American participants, most intercollegiate teams are far from diverse.

Stepp (1997) argues that the reasons for the lack of growth are structural, cultural,

and behavioral barriers. Structural barriers include glass ceilings and the lack of power which when applied to debate showed that women and underrepresented populations faced a glass ceiling of participating beyond the junior varsity level because they rarely advanced to elimination rounds, which caused them to lose credibility that is typically granted to White male debaters. Another structural barrier identified was that the debate topics each year were unrelatable to women and minorities. Next, cultural barriers are present because debate culture is influenced most by White males, which "prohibits women and minorities from successful experiences and educational opportunities" (Stepp, 1997 p. 181). Cultural barriers are upheld by the way men and women are socialized into stereotypical gender roles. Finally, behavioral level barriers are based on the stereotypes, attitudes, and attributions allocated to women and members of nondominant cultures. Worthen and Pack (1993) reported that women debaters were caught in a double bind, because if they were passive then they were not good debaters, but if they were assertive, then they were considered "bitchy." When examined further, it was determined that judges voted female/female debate partners as the least successful when compared against male/male and male/female partnerships. Furthermore, women debaters experience sexist language and sexual harassment from their own teams and the multitude of other teams at debate tournaments (Women's Debate Institute, 2010). Issues of diversity and the gender bias continue to plague nondominant populations and women.

Beyond debates about debating and issues of diversity and gender bias, other complexities at a more localized level regarding students and their debate practices are also important. For example, in Fine's (2001) ethnography of high school debate, he explores the intricacies of debate by focusing on how debaters talk, form a culture, and

live within an adolescent and adult world. Perhaps his strongest argument is how debaters oscillate between an adolescent and adult world, which influences students' development of self and public identities. Fine writes,

> Adolescents can draw upon the tools of both childhood and adulthood in establishing who they are and creating an indigenous, authentic culture. This helps to explain how teens can seem simultaneously and alternately very sophisticated and very childish. . . . Many adolescent activities have these features. It is not that adolescents have reached a plateau that is half way between childhood and adulthood, but rather they oscillate in their behavioral choices, while struggling to create a communal identity. Adolescents are both adults and children. (p. 163)

High school debaters struggle with this type of dichotomy because on the one hand they are charged with discussing controversial topics, in reasoned ways and at the same time they are 14-18 years old and have a need to act their age. Fine's finding is important because it demonstrates through qualitative research how debaters create a debate world or culture and the behaviors that students use to create that identity. Debating about debate is one thing, but explaining the context of how debaters debate is equally important.

Urban Debate Leagues

As mentioned in the introduction, 24 urban debate leagues in the nation's largest cities have been founded, over 500 schools have participated, and more than 40,000 urban public school students have competed in an UDL. All UDLs are nonprofit organizations and are overseen by the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL), which was founded in 1997. NAUDL is responsible for building a network of UDLs across the United States with the goal of facilitating the participation of as many urban students as possible in policy debate. NAUDL hosts a yearly tournament for the top two teams from each league to compete. Attending the National Championships is

considered to be the highest honor participants in UDLs can achieve besides winning the tournament. For the purposes of this study, it is important to understand the typical practices of an UDL.

NAUDL reports that participating in urban debate is of value to the individual students, the school system and to communities (NAUDL, 2014). First, the benefits to students include improving academic performance, refining of decision-making skills, bridging the high school to college gap, and preparing for future career paths. Second, urban debate influences schools systems through improved test scores, critical dialogues sparked by debaters in their classes, resolution of disagreements in a constructive manner, and the cost effectiveness of the program. Third, the value of urban debate to communities lies in the ability of debaters to contribute to the democratic process by making informed decisions and expressing themselves effectively as well as becoming leaders in their communities.

Each UDL operates as a nonprofit that is overseen by NAUDL. UDLs are responsible for funding their organization and debaters. Typically, it costs less than $750.00 to fund each debater which when compared with the national average of $1,500.00 per debater is approximately half the cost. However, these amounts can be misleading depending upon how much assistance the local school districts allocate to UDLs compared to suburban/private schools where the $1,500.00 is more reflective of the student's out of pocket costs not what their schools contribute. Typically, UDLs receive little help from individual schools as most do not provide a debate budget for their team. Since urban debaters do not pay anything to debate, UDLS must raise enough money to support their program, which they do by applying for grants from various

institutions. Urban debaters receive all their supplies like pens, highlighters, notepads, file folders, etc. for free.

A hefty part of the cost to support debaters is the provision of what are called "core files." Core files are packets of preresearched affirmative and negative evidence that novice and junior varsity students use to debate from.[1] The core files contain everything the students need to debate. The main reason UDLs produce and require their debaters to debate from these files is to eliminate unequal access to resources or the lack of having any resources at all. The use of core files eliminates this inequity because everyone debates from the same evidence. There is one exception; debaters at the varsity level, those students with 2 years of experience, are required to build their own cases and find their own evidence; thus they must learn research skills and information literacy. Varsity level debaters typically develop their cases at a summer camp they attend. Many UDLs run a free summer camp for their debaters, which enhances their debating and researching skills.

The use of core files is a bit controversial because the students do not research their own arguments and using the same files is considered repetitious and uncreative. Only novice and junior varsity debaters use the files, while varsity debaters do all of their own research and development of cases and evidence to refute an array of arguments. Setting aside the very important issues of equity and access, the core files are used at every debate tournament so the arguments from these topics grow old and do encourage mimicry. On the other hand, the novice and junior varsity levels often do not have the reading comprehension skills or vocabulary to adequately understand the complexity of

[1] Novice debaters are 1st year debaters and junior varsity have debated for 1 year.

the files. It's not until typically the third tournament that the novice and junior varsity debaters truly understand what they are arguing for and against. The result of this is the debaters then get creative with the evidence to form new arguments. At the end of the first semester of school, both levels of debaters get a new case to argue from so the students start the process all over again. While the core files are "canned arguments and evidence" for the debaters, UDLs are made up of students who have never experienced such an activity or possess the skills they need to participate in debate. However, students in UDLs often experience huge jumps in their reading and comprehension levels as well as their vocabularies. If we return to issues of equity and access, then using the core files is less based on mimicry, but on sustained learning of the materials by the students. Having debated at the novice and junior varsity levels now gives the varsity debaters an advantage because they learn how to put together a case based on what they learned from using the core files.

Additionally, UDLs solely use policy debate for several reasons. First, policy debate is the most rigorous type of debate because it requires students to develop extensive knowledge about social and economic policies and have the ability to write and defend a plan regarding the assigned policy topic. Second, according to NAUDL, "policy debate develops core academic skills: literacy, critical thinking, research, communication, organization, and supporting of arguments" (NAUDL, 2014). These skills improve academic achievement. Third, policy debate encourages students to speak out about policies that affect them; it provides them with a voice about political issues of today (NAUDL, 2014).

Urban Debate League Research

Some research has been conducted on UDLs and their influence on urban debaters; the research has been exceedingly positive. Early research, for example, reports that students who become debaters in a UDL increase their literacy scores by 25%, improve grade point averages by approximately 10%, graduate from high school almost 100% of the time, and matriculate to college between 71-91% often with scholarships for debate (Collier, 2004). Early UDL research included publications of executive summaries, testimonial evidence, small quantitative studies, and a series of essays about the results of UDLs. For instance, UDLs distinctly separate UDL debate from traditional policy debate and its history because the traditional history of debate has been only for the historically privileged. Until UDLs were formed, debate existed solely in suburban and elite schools and at the intercollegiate level (Fine, 2001). According to Giroux (2006), UDLs are in the process of changing class dynamics through their intentions to include working-class youth, women, and students of color. Now, debate is used for the historically underprivileged.

Current statistics on urban debaters reveals that 86% of participants are of color and 76% come from low-income families. The average GPA of an urban debater is 3.23, which is significantly above the college readiness benchmark, and each semester a student debates their grades improve. Urban debaters are more likely to be college ready, which is why 90% of urban debaters graduate on time from high school in 4 years and 86% enroll in college (NAUDL, 2014).

These statistics reveal why debating is also viewed by many as transformative (Baker, 1998; Giroux, 2006; Lee, 1998; Warner & Bruschke, 2001). Warner and

Bruschke (2001) write, “There is faith in the ability of debate to fundamentally alter a person's orientation toward education” (p. 2). As a former UDL debater, Lee (1998) sees UDLs as pedagogical agents that spur students to question and challenge commonly held beliefs or accepted truths, to become self-directed learners, and most importantly to “take charge of their educational destiny and at once make it a sight of resistance” (p. 96). Furthermore, Lee asks us to imagine what graduations from high school might look like when each year millions of underprivileged young men and women walk across that stage with the abilities to express their own needs, the needs of others, and the capacity to create solutions for change.

Research on UDLs is gaining momentum. In order to establish the validity of the organization, research on UDLs has become increasingly quantitative in nature. NAUDL needs to establish a causal link between urban debate and student academic achievement to prove its efficacy. Quantitative studies, particularly longitudinal studies, are effective because they help solidify the effectiveness of UDLs. In the past 4 years, there have been three longitudinal studies that have worked to establish a causal relationship between UDLs and academic achievement. All three articles describing these studies used data from the Chicago Urban Debate League from 1996-2007 and were spearheaded by Brianna Mezuk. In the first article, Mezuk (2009) wanted to understand how debaters who chose to participate in debate were different from nonparticipants and how debate influenced students GPAs, ACT scores, graduation rates, etc. Mezuk reported three findings. First, students with higher test scores and GPAs self-selected to join debate. This is a potentially problematic finding because UDLs target all inner-city urban youth not just those with already higher test scores or a propensity to debate. Second, Mezuk

determined that the intensity or the number of rounds a student debates positively increases test scores and benchmarks for readiness in English and Reading. Thus, the more the student debates the better he does academically. Third, regardless of self-selection and intensity, the author determined that 77.4% of debaters graduated compared to 55% of nondebaters; therefore nearly half of all nondebaters did not graduate. These findings are important overall because they demonstrate that participation in debate lowers the dropout rate and increased participation in debate raises test scores and graduation rates.

In her second article, Mezuk, Bondarenko, Smith, and Tucker (2011) asked about the relationship between academic achievement and college readiness amongst high school students who participate in urban debate. The primary findings of Mezuk et al. after accounting for student self-selection were that Chicago Debate League debaters were more likely to graduate high school, perform better on the ACT, meet benchmarks in all subjects, and show higher increases in cumulative GPAs. The researchers concluded that debate is associated with college readiness and academic achievement. This article is important because it identifies debate as a means to defy all of the discourses underrepresented, urban, and poor students hear about themselves as failures and shows that through debate, academic achievement is possible.

For her final article, Anderson and Mezuk (2012) examined the association between participation in a competitive policy debate program and the likelihood of graduating high school and college readiness. This study aimed to explicitly examine whether the association between debate participation and achievement varies for high-risk and low-risk students. At risk variables included students' eighth-grade

achievements, poverty status, and enrollment in special education. The authors hypothesized that a) at risk students who debate will have the highest debate participation and academic achievement for all at risk students and b) academic achievement will be influenced by debaters with the most participation and competitive success. While previous studies examined the average influence of debate, this study examined whether there would be a difference in achievement for "at risk" students. The findings determined that 1) for every risk factor (prior achievement, poverty, special education status) debaters were notably more likely to graduate than nondebaters suggesting debate as an effective tool for raising school engagement and lowering dropout rates; 2) debaters earned significantly higher scores on the English, Reading, and Science benchmarks for the ACT; thus, debate is associated with college readiness even amongst those students most at risk; and 3) the intensity of debate was also influenced by quantity and success which created higher academic achievement. In addition to these new findings, this study determined that a causational relationship exists between the likelihood of graduation and the amount of debate participation. All three of the Mezuk studies help build the case for the efficacy of UDLs. Efficacy is needed in order to justify the implementation of UDLs across the country because they prove they can assist urban students with higher academic achievement and high school graduation. However, Mezuk's research does not complete the picture of UDLs. UDLs need to know how and why UDLs are successful and to answer those types of questions, qualitative research is needed.

The Drawbacks of Urban Debate Leagues

Not all research supports UDLs; in fact, the history of debate as an all-White male activity troubles the foundations of UDLs and media representations of urban debaters

that discursively script Black bodies and tokenizes them. According to Wise (2011), "debate literally exudes whiteness, and privileges of White participants" (p. 68). Student populations, like society, do not reflect equal representation of Latina/os, Blacks, American Indians, etc. and this holds true for debate. Wise identifies key issues that prevent participation in debate including money and several aspects of competitive debate itself. First, debate is very expensive. To be competitive on national circuits, debate costs a lot of money because it is necessary to fly to many tournaments, hire experienced coaches, and have access to technology and research. Also, those students who really want to succeed pay to go to summer debate camps where they receive a jump on the competition because they learn that year's debate topic before the start of the school year.

Second, besides the money, Wise (2011) also questions several key practices of debate. First, he criticizes "spreading" where students rattle off approximately 500 words a minute because this negates the idea of debate as a political discussion that anyone can understand. Debate becomes about reading so fast that your opponents cannot keep up with you and therefore they "drop" arguments that the other team will then argue to the judge are important points their opponents missed and they should win the debate because their opponents failed to address these very important arguments.

While Wise thinks there is something to be learned in the research process of debate, another problematic practice involves the types of arguments competitive debaters make. Wise states:

> The fact remains that superficiality, speed and mass extinction scenarios typically take the place of nuanced policy analysis, such that one has to wonder how much the debaters really come to know about the issues they debate at the end of the day. Learning is always secondary to winning, and for the sake of winning,

debaters will say virtually anything. (pp. 70-71)

Students make sure that their arguments for or against a certain policy either end in nuclear war or ecological cataclysm. No matter how unlikely this is to happen, debaters find ways that may be completely absurd to link all policies to support these two scenarios. Moreover, debaters find themselves arguing for ridiculous scenarios that support the status quo. Wise recalls one particular debate where he had to argue that poverty should be allowed to continue. Wise explains that these types of arguments are inherently White because Whites (especially affluent ones) are much more so than students of color to have the "luxury of looking at life or death issues of war, peace, famine, unemployment, or criminal justice as a game, a mere exercise in intellectual and rhetorical banter" (pp. 71-72).

Many of the topics competitive policy debaters make presuppose that the arguments do not affect them because they are White. For instance, arguing that unemployment is good surmises that the debater most likely has working parents or that racial profiling is necessary when one has never been racially profiled. Asking disadvantaged youth to take up these positions is ludicrous in light of the fact that if these types of positions are enacted, it could destroy their communities. This is why Wise argues, "debate reinforces whiteness and affluence" (p. 72). However, he does describe Urban Debate Leagues as sites of change as they engage different styles of argumentation and evidentiary standards.

Reid-Brinkley (2012) also critiques UDLs because of how they allow the media to cast certain debaters as representatives of UDLs. In an article entitled, "Ghetto Kids Gone Good: Race, Representation and Authority in the Scripting of Inner-City Youths in the Urban Debate League," Reid-Brinkley explores how the media represent UDL urban

students of color, particularly Black students using transformative discourses that tokenize these students and place them against a frame of the "ghetto" at risk youth narrative. For her project, Reid-Brinkley examined news articles and video segments about UDL students and found that Black UDL participants were scripted by the media in three ways including through poverty, familial dysfunctionality, and criminal offspring. According to Reid Brinkley, "This essay attempts to theorize about the strategies of media framing and the manner in which Black bodies are scripted according to framing practices" (p. 85).

The first frame, poverty, is set up by the media when they open their articles or segments by identifying UDL students from lower-income households who often qualify for reduced or free lunches. Students are made out to be destitute in the poverty frame. Schools are portrayed as dilapidated or "warehouse institutions where underachieving students are stored" (p. 89). Then the descriptions turn to touting the rates of educational failure in these poor minority communities. Emphasis is placed on the students who attend these failing schools because students are framed as graduating less, earning low test scores, and having few students matriculate to college. Schools must be painted this way so that UDL debaters can be framed as being transformed by the program.

The frame of poverty turns into racialized poverty once the media starts making comparisons to suburban schools and their debate programs. In one particular news segment, UDL students were shown in front of a beautiful suburban school with well-dressed debaters in sharp contrast to the UDL students who were dressed in t-shirts and jeans. This shot of the suburban and UDL students was meant to depict UDL students as being out of place because of incomplete scripting where the UDL students who had

transformed because of debate may be the exception, but the shot shows they will never fit in.

The second frame, dysfunctional families, and third frame, criminal offspring, portray UDL students coming from severely maladjusted homes including homes where parents make bad decisions like using the stove to heat the home or where parents are considered drug abusers and criminals. Either way, parents are considered incapable of meeting the basic needs of their children and without those needs being met all children are destined to be failures and even criminals.

To be successful, the media has to recast the UDL debaters as "black youths as victors able to transcend poverty and familial/cultural dysfunction" (p. 93). This transformation must be scripted by the "recirculation of race, class, and gender norms in order to make the transformative tale intelligible." Students must transform from point A to point B. The transformative tale requires an explanation of the student's before status as contrasted with the after story of how the UDL transformed the student. The media wants the audience to see at-risk students who are likely to fail in their poor, urban school and instead succeed as a result of debate participation.

In the end of her article, Reid-Brinkley questions why we have to frame UDL students, particularly those with Black bodies in such ways to be media worthy. She ponders why students cannot be cast as smart or why not frame students through "the drama of competition, the highs and lows of winning and losing" etc. (p. 95). She concludes that it is unnecessary to demonize Black youths, families and culture despite mentioning the hardships or economic advantages some student's lack. Not all UDL debaters come from the backgrounds portrayed by the media, but it is obvious to see how

the media uses these deterministic frames to portray UDL youth, especially Black youths.

The criticisms Reid-Brinkley and Wise set forth are legitimate claims. News portrayals of urban debate league participants do often script Black and Hispanic bodies I would add, into poster children of UDLs by emphasizing their "impoverished and unhealthy backgrounds" as something they have overcome by participating in debate. While not directly asserted by Reid-Brinkley, it is important to understand that the author's talk of the script of poverty being shown through the media is actually a material reality for most UDL participants. Most students are poor. While the media scripts this as part of their stories about successful UDL debaters this does not change the actual reality of living in poverty. Living in poverty is demoralizing, taxing, and frightening, etc. It is not necessary for this to be scripted for others to understand.

Additionally, as part of her conclusion, Reid-Brinkley suggests one of many angles that the media could take was exploring competition, and winning and losing. Winning and losing are very important to debaters but they sometimes fall into the trap of "winning at all costs." The problem with "winning at all costs" is it prevents nuanced and contextualized understandings of debaters because all they convey to others is that they must win despite any harms to others or themselves. There is a distinct difference from having an identity as a winner to winning at all costs. If the media were to consider this angle, it could potentially be problematic for representations of UDL debaters too.

In sum, Wise finds the history and practice of debate itself to be problematic. His critiques about debate are difficult to argue against because the history and practice of debate privileges elite, White males and some of the current practices of debate treat it as a game where the policies being argued about often affect underrepresented populations

differentially. Reid-Brinkley creates awareness of how UDL students are unfairly scripted by the media as being poor, from dysfunctional homes, and having criminal off-spring. My question becomes, how do you then argue for UDLs use of debate to improve academic achievement when the disenfranchised populations they serve are expected to participate in their own hegemony?

While not easily answered, Giroux (2006) argues that the promise of UDLs is that they:

> reinforce substantive democratic education and tradition by fostering rigorous and passionate discussions about social change and how it is to be achieved. The Urban Debate League approaches matters of school equity, reform, and agency through the use of academic debate as a way to help urban public school students learn the skills, disciplines, knowledge, and values that enable them to become critically literate and effectively engaged citizens. (pp. 229)

Debate is then viewed as a critical literacy that empowers its participants to learn not only the skills it takes to debate but also to become critical change agents that are able to promote democracy. Giroux argues that "to be voiceless is to be powerless" and UDLs foster students voices to be heard in the public sphere and help create a future that does not imitate the past.

Academic Identities

UDLs are the means by which students from underserved populations can foster an array of skills and develop a multitude of proficiencies consistent with increased academic achievement and high school graduation. In looking back over the research, one thing is clear—participation in UDLs changes students. It is through the enactment of debate skills that students truly engage in change because debate is a lived, embodied performance where students continuously develop and extend their identities.

Every team "develops a culture that comes to symbolize the group to its

members" (Fine, 2001, p. 149). Fine (2001) calls the local sets of meaning debate teams create an "ideoculture," which is a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and customs, shared by members of an interacting group (p. 149). For example, teams might have a series of rituals they perform before or after debating. Team life, time commitments, group relations all work to develop a group culture from which a powerful identity emerges. The identities that emerge are both group and individually based. Being a debater on a certain team serves as an identity marker to other teams while individual identity is established through different types of talk. Fine (2001) writes, "Talk is not merely talk; but a mark of self" (p. 244). Debaters establish a self-identity, an identity within their team, and through debate overall.

Amongst those identities offered, as defined by the students, may be an academic identity. Academic identity is "an individual's sense of affiliation with practices of schooling" (Nasir & Saxe, 2003, p. 17). Academic identity is not a term that has made its way into communication literatures, but is gaining momentum in psychology and sociology. Some examples of how academic identity has been studied include creating good or bad academic identities through the discipline of the academy (Grant, 1997); rating the importance of how well a student does in school (Walton & Cohen, 2007); coordinating academic behavior with career choices or expectations (Oyserman & Destin, 2010); defining a sense of belonging within school settings (Goodenow, 1993); and investigating students' studying behaviors and style of writing (Hyland, 2011). In another study, Walker and Syed (2013) operationalize academic identity as the subjective connection to the one's academic major.

The literature on academic identities is problematic and disparate because neither

the term *academic* nor the term *identity* is operationalized in similar ways, using similar theories. Academic might refer to a specific aspect of a student's schooling or a general definition that lumps aspects of schooling into one term. Defining identity theory is even worse because authors use Ericksonian theory to social identity theory to Foucaultian theory. It's difficult to compare studies or find commonalities because the few studies that do exist all define academic and identity in different ways.

A more recent trend in the literature is to explore how academic identities coincide with students' ethnic identities. Nasir and Saxe (2003) argue that minority students, specifically African Americans, are sometimes forced to choose between having both a strong ethnic and academic identity. Research has shown that African Americans have often been forced to choose between academic and ethnic identities through accusations of "acting White" or being "raceless" to do well academically (Davidson, 1996; Ferguson, 2000; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1987). Still other students disengage with school activities because of their ethnic selves (Davidson, 1996). All students bring their ethnic selves into the classroom, but typically only White ethnicity is accepted because it is the norm.

Nasir (2012) argues "our society organizes for the success of some and the failure of others" (p. 8). The author examines the consequences for the learner and racial identities of African Americans. African Americans and their academic and racial identities are treated as a series of co-existing opportunities and strengths within different learning contexts. Taking the idea that identities are fostered through the opportunities offered or denied, such as support, feedback and access to knowledge, Nasir concludes with tentative normative suggestions. She reflects upon three educational case studies

where positive African American identities have been fostered. Although there is recognition that the allocation of material resources across the education system remains deeply inequitable, the focus is on developing personal relationships between students and staff, encouraging students in terms of their intellectual ability and positively framing the heritage and contemporary positions of African Americans.

Academic identities are relevant to this project because there is a connection between debate and academic achievement from urban school populations as demonstrated by the literature on UDLs. Developing a relationship with a schooling practice is important for students to create a bond with their school, which can be accomplished through debate. As academic identities are under theorized, this study may be able to expand or clarify this theory in ways that explain the connections the debaters make to debate as seen through the lens of their ethnic identities.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented several key literatures that influence UDLs and their participants. First, debate is an educational practice that assists students in gaining valuable academic skills that are relevant to the debaters now and beyond high school. These critical thinking and presentational speaking skills are developed through the practice of policy debate, which was explained and also theorized as being technical and rigidly structured. Second, as with any educational practice, there are always discussions and criticisms to help ensure that the practice is educationally sound. The "debate about debate" critiques while troublesome benefited policy debate because ethical and pedagogical criticisms were resolved, which benefited debaters, coaches, and the practice of policy debate. More critiques need to be held about the diversity of debaters and the

gender bias that exists. Third, it is important to understand how UDLs operate and what they do to benefit their debaters. The use of core files is an area that needs further investigation because the novice and junior varsity's use of them may be a form of mimicry, which may limit the skills of the debaters. Fourth, UDL research is particularly promising for gains in academic achievement, graduation rates, and matriculation to college, but criticisms of UDLs are also important to explore in order for this educational practice to be an ethically and pedagogically sound activity. One of the most important critiques of UDLs, which is particularly relevant to this study, are the poverty scripts Reid-Brinkley argues the media assigns to urban debaters. The media may represent UDL debaters in this manner, but they are forgetting that poverty is a material reality for most UDL participants. Finally, the concept of academic identities is also presented as an argument for the potential of describing students' sense of connection to their schools through their ethnicity. The hope is to flesh this theory out and make it relevant to communication studies.

Upcoming chapters include Chapter 5, which is another portraiture of one of the participants in this study. Chapter 6 presents the theoretical framework for the study—identity. This discussion provides support for what identities the students may possibly experience in an UDL. Chapter 7 offers insight into Carminda's experiences and Chapter 8 details the methodology. The remaining chapters analyze the data collected and a conclusion is provided.

CHAPTER 5

XAVIER: SAPPY, SNARKY, AND SASSY

"Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede!" "Don't you want to be represented?" "Don't you want some brown on our Executive Board? Don't you want some color? Then vote for me, Xavier!" "Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede!" This was Xavier's battle cry as he marched through the lunchroom and hallways trying to gain votes from Hispanic students so that he could to be on the Executive Board at John Dewey High School. Sí Se Puede means "Yes it is possible" or "Yes we can" and it is a historical rallying cry that was invented by the United Farm Workers in 1972 and was most recently used as the Spanish translation of President Obama's "Yes we can" slogan. Xavier campaigned directly to the Hispanic students to vote for him because mainly only White students ran for Executive Board and voted. In the end, he did not win, but he received enough votes that they created a position for him as Executive Board at Large. He was so happy and I was too!

Xavier is a 16-year-old junior and this is his 1st year on the debate team. Xavier is Hispanic, about 5'6" and slender with floppy black hair, big black glasses, and sometimes a mustache. He is wicked smart and well read. His backpack is always filled with books he is reading for pleasure including psychology textbooks. Xavier is absolutely hilarious and animated when he is allowed to be. He was sometimes difficult to interview because he always had me laughing. However, Xavier's hilarity only grew

as I got to know him better, and he revealed more of himself throughout the course of the debate season. For example, when I asked him what it meant for him to be a debater, he told me it means he is an "intellectual badass!"

At the beginning of the semester, after I was introduced by Mrs. Taylor to the class, and I explained why I was there and asked for participants, Xavier was one of the first to come and speak with me. He was very curious about my research, what a dissertation was, and why had I chosen his class. He immediately agreed to participate. From then on, Xavier always greeted me when he entered the class and always said good-bye. Xavier was part of the pull I felt when I chose which side of the room to sit on. I actually ended sitting right next to him. He would always peek at my computer to see what I was writing and when someone would say something rude or inappropriate, he would say, "Ooooh she is writing that down!" This always made me blush because of course that was exactly what I was doing!

In order to better get to know Xavier, I asked him how would you describe yourself to someone that does not know you? He answered,

> I would call myself a passionate person and I would say uhh how do I phrase this...I'm emotional in the things I care about but logical in making decisions towards stuff. Like for instance I'm very passionate about the environment, but I wouldn't go live in a tree. I want to make logical decisions that best protect the environment and stuff like that. I would also say I'm smart that I'm very intuitive—it's probably one of my top three strongest qualities, my intuition, in the sense that I'm like even though I don't know things I still feel things and Oh I have a bad feeling about this person or I have a good feeling about this person and I'm usually right about that. 96% accurate I took the test! Several actually. I would say I'm caring to an extent. Xavier also referred to himself as both pragmatic, sappy, snarky, and sassy. He says, I can be considerate. I know I can be insensitive but part of the reason I'm insensitive is that I'm snarky, I'm very snarky and I'm very sassy, but part of why I'm sassy is because I'm argumentative, opinionated and passionate about what I argue about and arguing itself.

"Being sassy" or having sass is a way to say someone is quick-witted, bold in the way

they speak, opinionated as well as being contradictory on purpose. Sassiness is spoken in a way that is typically disrespectful, but because it is spoken in such a way, it is funny. As part of being sassy, Xavier mentioned one time that fashion sense was an aspect of what he liked about debate, which is humorous because Xavier did not have great fashion sense and he knew it. He once talked about how he loved wearing these knock off brand shoes to debate in because they squeaked when he walked, which he loved because it drew attention to him.

Speaking of sassy, I asked Xavier what it meant to be a debater and as mentioned previously he said it meant to be an intellectual badass; however a bit later, I did get a more serious answer out of him. He related,

> What does it mean to be a debater, I think it means well first it means being a team you know as a whole group, the entire class of debaters so you have loyalty to them and then . . . and it is having a loyalty to your partner and then having the loyalty to yourself to strive up and be able to be given something and create this entirely new thing so in a way you are creators because you're creating a story to argue a point.

Describing debate as a something you create and as a story you create to argue a certain point, is not only eloquent, but speaks to the creativity Xavier found in being a debater. Even though debates are very rigid and so is the evidence novices were allowed to read, Xavier saw debate as a way to craft a story, but instead of using just your imagination, he used the evidence he had been provided. Xavier did this in his everyday school life because he is a writer for the school paper and a member of the literary club for which he had several stories published. I purchased the literary magazine just so I could preserve his essays.

Like his fellow debaters, Xavier used his debate skills in his other classes, but Xavier took the use of his skills to a whole new level. He intimates,

> It's really helped me in English like I had to write an essay and I was like--the essay was what important issues should be considered when discussing space travel and like I was thinking impact calculus in my head. And on my essay, I got almost a 100. It was an AP essay so I got like a high 8 or a low 9 and my argument was it will cause global disaster and its expiration will crumble diplomacy and cause psychological trauma.

I started laughing as soon as Xavier said he used "impact calculus" to write his essay. Impact calculus is a concept debaters use to describe the probability an event will happen, the magnitude of the event, and the timeframe it will happen in. This is actually a creative way to write an essay. I nearly started crying with laughter when he said global disaster would occur, diplomacy would crumble, and psychological trauma would ensue. This is of course a bunch of debate jargon and not particularly funny to people outside of the debate world or you as the reader. So here is why this is funny. The most popular way the negative side of a debate tries to win is to claim that everything the affirmative's plan does will cause nuclear war, everyone will die and the world will end. In a debate, it is all prevented very logically, but to write like this in an English class where a student is comparing space travel to the death and destruction of a nuclear war is very dramatic and unusual. When I was listening to Xavier describe what he was writing, I was imagining his poor English teacher reading this dark and dismal, "the world is going to end" essay where the other students were probably benignly supporting space travel! Xavier definitely exploited his debate knowledge in a creative way that is in keeping with his extreme intelligence and his sassiness.

Xavier and his partner Juan were fairly successful as novices at the tournaments. They won more rounds than they lost and picked up an occasional speaker award or team award. I always liked to observe Xavier and his partner debate because they loved to use post it notes to communicate with each other. Xavier would quickly write one up and

slam it down on Juan's desk. Juan would quickly reply and slam it back down on Xavier's desk. Since the post-it's were different colors and they wrote so many of them, their desks would be littered with different colored post it notes, which at the end of the debate Xavier would collect and save to laugh at later. I got to see some of the notes he collected and some of them were about the debate, some were about what they should do, others expressed confusion, and still others were filled with curse words!

As Xavier gained experience and confidence as a debater, he grew stylistically as a speaker. Sometimes in a debate round, debaters will emphasize certain words by reading them louder than other pieces of evidence. Xavier started to do this, but of course, with his own sense of drama and flair adding hand gestures and different body stances. Once, Xavier drew a judge that sat down and as the debate round went on, the judge took no notes. This is very rare and problematic for a host of reasons, but debaters are expected to adapt to their judges and the fact that the judge took no notes in this case indicated he knew little about debate. Xavier immediately understood that this debate would be won or lost not by what he said, but how he said something; therefore, Xavier boldly read all of his evidence, emphasized key phrases and evidence, and explained why the judge should vote for him. In my estimation, Xavier and Juan should have lost that debate, but because of Xavier's dramatic speaking, they won! And, Xavier earned almost perfect speaker points.

CHAPTER 6

IDENTITY: A VERITABLE DISCURSIVE EXPLOSION

This dissertation examines how urban students explore different identities while they are participating in an Urban Debate League. The purpose of the study was to examine UDLs as an educational practice where students articulate the influence participating in policy debate has on their identities. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for this study. Identity has been chosen as the theoretical construct because schools are where identities are explored, engaged, negotiated, or even rejected. Both research questions for this study ask about identities offered by and explored within the context of a particular UDL. Identity functions as a lens with which to see the project because to some theorists and practitioners, schools exist to help students create a variety of individual and collective identities (Dewey, 1916). However, critics of the socialization process argue that students are merely used as cogs in the wheel of production and reproduction (Giroux, 1983). Talking with students who are participating in a particular UDL affords the opportunity to see how interventions can disrupt the assumption of assimilated identities and offer alternative identities to students.

This chapter examines three primary areas: schools as sites of socialization and identity work, the works of Stuart Hall on explicating a theory of identity, and

Communication Education and identity work. The goal is to lay out for the reader the overwhelming influence of education and schools in our lives and how this lays a foundation for certain types of student identities, particularly for students of color. The process used to construct an identity is detailed through Stuart Hall's conceptions of what identity actually is (or is not) and what the process is to establish one. Thus, through the works of Hall, we conceptualize what identity is and how it functions. Finally, the field of Communication Education is explored for conceptions of identity because Communication Education is rooted in education, teaching, and learning all of which are important to establishing aspects of student identities.

Schools as Sites of Socialization and Identity Work

There are many ways to view the function of education and schools in our society; however, most viewpoints agree to the centrality of education in shaping many aspects of people and their function in society. Besides family life and religion, schooling is seen as central to building a person's identity. Early researchers began to examine the influence of schools after the industrialization movement when almost all children began attending school and schooling became universal. From a functionalist perspective, researchers in this area such as Durkheim (1961) and Parsons (1959) examine a) how schools contribute to societal values like value consensus and social solidarity and b) how the identification of the functional relationships between education and parts of the social system lead to an examination of the relationship between education and the economic system.

There are five key concepts of the functionalist perspective. First, education passes on society's culture, which means through education children learn central norms, values and aspects of culture that bond them together, or what is called value consensus.

Second, education leads to socialization of children by a) schools that are considered a miniature society that reflects back the broader society and b) schools that take over primary socialization from the role of the parents by providing a link between family values and universal values like meritocracy. Third, schools equip students with the trainings and qualifications to do the jobs that society needs. Only the best end up in the most qualified jobs while those who are not considered the best end up in less favorable jobs, which creates a division of labor. From a functionalist position, everyone is given an equal chance but some people work harder, and have better innate abilities, than others leading to inequalities in society, which are seen as fair and just. Finally, society is seen as a meritocracy and the educational system supports this by acting as a mechanism to select the right people for the right jobs based on their hard work and efforts or lack thereof. Furthermore, in order to maintain society schools should strictly enforce school rules through a reward and punishment system so that students accept the "correct way of living." In sum, schools act as a microcosm of society providing what it needs and responding to changes in culture and economy.

In the functionalist approach, students' identities are still largely shaped by their families, but school requires that students accept universal standards and values. As mentioned, this is called value consensus, which forms the basic integrating principles shared by society. If students, parents, and society share these values like democracy and economic status then they have similar identities, which avoids societal conflicts. The problem with the functionalist approach is that some benefit from it while many others do not. It leads to inequality in schools and society as schools are what prepare students to exist in society.

A critical or conflict approach to the function of schools starts in a much different place and argues that we will never achieve equality in a capitalist society so when functionalists argue that there is equality of opportunity and jobs are based on merit, critical theorists argue that is not equality. Instead, class issues determine who become skilled professionals and who become laborers. Critical theorists trace their roots back to Marxism where the owners of capital or the ruling class exploit the working classes. This separation is insidious because no physical force is used. Instead, the ruling class ideology, which is hidden from the consciousness of the working class or "false consciousness" makes it seem normal that schools teach meritocracy through the use of reward and punishment behaviors so that members of the working class learn to be rewarded for being told what to do. Louis Althusser (1971) determined that in a capitalist society, education is used to reproduce an efficient and obedient working class and the way that happens is through what he calls an Ideological State Apparatus, which, in this case is school. Althusser argued that school taught students the ideology of capitalism by encouraging competition between fellow students and educated students to be compliant and submissive to authority just as a student is taught to accept the authority of his or her teacher. Again this process is masked through ideology and false consciousness. In this case, student identities are shaped by their membership in the ruling or working class and for the working class acquiescence to authority and a zest for competition are what is created through a capitalistic society.

Bowles and Gintis' book (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America* reinforced Althusser's position and also argued that schools a) reflect the hierarchical structures of society through the hidden curriculum, b) justify the use of meritocracy even though it is

a myth, and c) reward on the basis of social background. The so-called "democratic mission" of education has failed because schools reproduce social and economic inequalities. The hidden curriculum is the elements of socialization that occur in schools that are not contained in the general curriculum.

Giroux (1983) defines the hidden curriculum as those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students, the underlying rules that structure the routine and social relationships in school and the classroom. Examples of the hidden curriculum are the rules teachers use and disciplinary measures, the teacher's use of language and selection of curriculum tools, the use of time tables, and tracking systems. Variations in these examples cause disparities and inequalities that correspond to class and social statuses. Schools are a site and teacher of politics.

The end result of the hidden curriculum is the production and reproduction of social relations in society and more importantly it produces an identity of conformity particularly in students. An identity of conformity involves the "routinization of every aspect of the students life, as well as the imposition of rules and regulations that became the operating norm of the institution" (Saldana, 2013, p. 229). Students become automatons in the system and lack individual identifying factors that separate them from one another or what is acceptable by society. I notice this a lot in the students I have taught. Many cannot describe their personality or strengths that they hold. They are too worried about conforming to what society wants them to be and forget the agency they have in becoming what they want to be. Not all students conform, but for those who do not the stakes are very high and typically detrimental.

In *Making and Molding Identity in Schools*, Davidson (1996) investigates student

identities through an ethnographic project at urban schools where specific students shared their concepts of their identities at the local school level. Like Giroux (1983) and Saldana (2013), Davidson orients her research from a poststructural position because of her emphases on "disciplinary technology…and serious speech acts" (p. 5). According to Davidson:

> Disciplinary technology and serious speech acts both contribute to the definition of what is "normal" in advance and, therefore, can be viewed as practices that teach or "discipline" participants to the meaning of institutional (and social) categories for example, prisoner, soldier, teacher, student. In schools, for example, the taken-for-granted, "objective" divisions of student's into academic tracks can be viewed as a disciplinary technology. (p. 5)

Disciplinary technology and serious speech acts add to the concept of false consciousness where divisions in labor and in this case labels create an imaginary separation between people. Davidson provides the example of academic tracking as a way of disciplining students, yet academic tracking is a very common practice in education so much so that those who do not use it make up a small minority.

Rooted in poststructuralism and Foucault's (1983) concept of power as "action upon action" where power is not used to distinguish others, but instead structures all that is possible in a field of actions, meaning that power circulates through all the possible ranges of behavior (p. 221). This structuring is where Davidson (1996) locates her definition of identity. She claims,

> identity can be conceptualized as a process that develops in a matrix of structuring social and institutional relationships and practices. Presentations of self, ranging from resistance to assimilation, are linked not only to minority status and perceptions of labor market opportunities but also to disciplinary technologies, serious speech acts, and other factors at the institutional level. Because schools participate in negotiating the meanings students attach to identity, the ways in which teachers and schools handle power and convey ethnically and racially relevant meanings become relevant to the conceptualization of students' behavior. (p. 6)

Here, Davidson argues how identity is conceptualized through an Ideological State apparatus, i.e., school, and the disciplinary technologies used demonstrate how schools use power to present what they deem as possible and acceptable conceptualizations of student identity. Thus, particularly for the working class, their identities have already been conceived for them and will be reinforced by their schooling; this also includes young people's racial and ethnic identities.

The ideology of schools as sites of production and reproduction are very deterministic, but they are also sites of resistance. Youth's racial and ethnic identities are incredibly salient, but because of disciplinary technologies and strong speech acts there is still the assumption that immigrants and their children will acculturate to a traditional model that "assumes that manifestations of ethnicity will gradually be replaced by Anglo traits and a *main stream* [emphasis mine] sense of identity" (Davidson, 1996, p. 19). Oppositional identities are formed in reaction to this main stream identity and students resist both overtly and covertly. One form of overt resistance is through the complete rejection of school by dropping out (Fine, 1991), whereas covert strategies often involve microbehaviors designed to resist authority, like speaking in one's first language when English is the required language. Davidson (1996), summarizing John Ogbu (1987) writes,

> cultural differences become markers of identity to be maintained in opposition to the dominant culture; furthermore, groups may develop secondary cultural differences, claiming and exaggerating certain forms of behavior, symbols, events and meanings as appropriate because they are not characteristic of members of another population. (p. 25)

These oppositional behaviors stem from historical, economic, and political realities, but also from day-to-day behaviors at the overall school and also the classroom level. Oppositional behaviors are both negatively and positively incorporated into the process

of schooling. The relationship between behaviors at the societal level and those at the local suggest that there is a relationship between the practices of identity, such as oppositional behaviors, and the politics of educational settings.

While Davidson (1996) recognizes how institutions, education, represent the socialization of schools and how they further or restructure identity, the author's main goal is to recognize how classroom practices influence students' identities. She argues that always looking at the societal factors masks how those societal structures are built and maintained through local school and classroom contextual factors. If one is concerned with social change, then researchers must examine the processes of production and reproduction from varied contextual perspectives. This means that Davidson focuses on localized practices to establish a relationship between classroom practices and indications of identity.

Davidson (1996) presents six case studies in her book. Each case study is analyzed for factors of alienation and oppositional behaviors students used to cope. The five factors of alienation are tracking, negative expectations, differential treatment because of race, bureaucratized relationships and practices and barriers to information. Of the five factors, tracking caused the most problems including social isolation and cultural estrangement. From the students' perspectives, they feel isolated because they have been placed in classes with all White students so they are separated from other Latinos, African Americans, or Vietnamese students. Davidson (1996) writes, "youths' sense of social isolation is enhanced as individuals from different groups have little opportunity to interact with peers" (pp. 38-39). Students also reported feelings of cultural estrangement including feeling like strangers or guests in the realm of school and

academics.

The second and third factors go hand in hand. Students experience negative expectations and differential treatment because of their race. Davidson describes European American teachers as ascribing achievement-oriented behavior as well as effort and motivation to European American students. As for students of color the teachers attribute their behaviors to factors out of their control. The European American teachers held higher expectations of the White students (Bacon, Tom, & Cooper, 1985). The level of expectation also falls along racial lines. A large percentage of the students in Davidson's (1996) study perceived differences in how they were treated versus how White students were treated. Through speech acts such as communicating with students in classroom conversations, lecturing, the rules and regulations in a classroom, and even nonverbal looks and glances all express how teachers share their different expectations and treat students differently based on their race.

The fourth and fifth factors share a similarity as well—one acts as a gatekeeper to the other. The fourth factor is bureaucratized relationships which are interactions between students and administration and other academic staff including teachers who make and enforce the rules. The students in Davidson's study (1996) determined that these rules and regulations are more strictly enforced for students of color. Since bureaucratized relations are controlled by adults, they then have control over the fifth factor which is barriers to information. The primary information held back from students was college and career information and opportunities. Students wanted to go to college, but the information on how exactly to do that was not shared with them, mainly because of the tracked classes they were divided into. School counselors did not share that type

of information with students in lower tracked classes.

These five factors greatly influenced how the students in this study thought about themselves and behaved. The students reported that these types of feelings resulted in factors affecting their academic engagement and expressions of identity. These three factors are limiting participation in class, silencing themselves in classrooms where they are the minority, and masking their expressions of their racial backgrounds. In addition, students reported feeling a lack of self-efficacy and motivation.

The factors the students reported affect expressions of student identity by limiting how the students can define themselves and allow those definitions to shift. First, limiting participation in classes at school prevents students from identifying a particular academic subject as something they may be good at. It takes away the students' ability to really live in knowledge and try out the identities this type of knowledge brings. Second, silencing oneself in classrooms where one is the minority influences one's identities by basically taking away the collective identities she belongs to and hiding them. This teaches students that there is something wrong with who they are. It affects one's identity because the student actively holds him- or herself back. Silencing oneself is also a protective measure of one's identity because by holding back the student does not risk ridicule or rejection. Third, masking expressions of racial backgrounds teaches students to internalize their cultural identities and hide them from the schooling process. There is such pressure to conform to the Anglo way of schooling. Masking one's racial background affects a student's identity because it forces students to deny their race. A student cannot bring their whole being to school and their learning is neither personalized nor accepting of the identities they bring to the classroom.

"Individual's experiences suggest strong links between conceptualization of identity and engagement in school" (p. 213). What these factors and their consequences say about identity is, one, identities are mutable. They can be hidden, denied, or even rejected in the face of schooling where disciplinary technologies and speech acts force students of color to at least on the surface to conform to the culture(s) of mainstream schooling. Students become mute and hold themselves back. Another consequence is conformity. As theorized earlier, systems of schooling require, through rules and disciplinary actions, all students to act alike. This denies students of color their collective and individual identities and their ability to express themselves through learning. The hiding or denial of oneself and forced conformity can lead to a failure of self-efficacy and motivation as identified by the students. It also causes hopelessness and feelings of meaninglessness. All of which squelch the multiple identities of students.

While Davidson (1996) describes in great detail how the five factors influence the students in her study, she also documents oppositional behaviors the students use to cope. For example, some of the students worked to establish proacademic and pro-Mexican behaviors by taking classes outside of the track they originally had been placed in and also by speaking in their native tongue as a way to push back at the standardization of the English language. One of the students embraced a "crazy Mexican" identity, which she inconsistently applied in the face of disciplinary technologies. This student argued that people think Mexicans are crazy so why not act like it. While oppositional in nature, this student's manifestations of the "crazy Mexican" also unfortunately reproduced this stereotype. Davidson reiterates that oppositional behaviors do not necessarily lead to reduced academic achievement, conformity, truancy, verbal/physical expressions of

anger and frustration, and dropping out. Oppositional behaviors often allow students to preserve their individual and collective identities.

In her concluding remarks, Davidson makes two important points. First, she solidifies the relationship between schooling and the construction of identities. She writes,

> three general factors emerged as particularly relevant to the construction of identities. These included disciplinary technologies, which divide and thereby marginalize, bureaucratized relationships and practices, which silence and thereby disempower, and speech acts, which serve to label groups positively or negatively. Thus, schools as institutions play roles in shaping certain parts of student identities. (p. 214)

Davidson sums up how schools create negative student identities that treat students of color as deficits.

Another important conclusion she draws is how the treatment of identity from a unified, inviolable whole is now looked on as an acceptance of multiple identities that challenge and cross or transcend social divisions. Relying on Anzaldua (1987), hooks, (1989) and Rosaldo (1989), Davidson concludes that "rather than choosing between assimilation and cultural maintenance, individuals can blend cultural elements and, in the process, develop a more critical perspective on both their own and others' culture" (p. 215). If the forced choice between assimilation and cultural maintenance is taken away, then it opens up space for more positive oppositional behaviors. In recognizing the ability to blend cultures, Davidson follows her commitment to a poststructural analysis of identity.

In sum, schools act as socializing institutions in society and most critical scholars argue that schools produce and reproduce the working class of America, which leads to false consciousness and conformity. Students' identities are influenced by these theories

because the power of schooling now outweighs parental and religious influences. In Davidson's (1996) work, she identifies how educational institutions shape student identities through a series of disciplinary technologies and speech acts. The work of critical scholars and scholars like Davidson is important to this project because they provide conceptualizations of the identities students express whether it be through denial, conformity, or oppositional behaviors. The next section explores how critical cultural studies examine theories of identity, part of which has already been demonstrated by the investigation of how schools are sites of socialization and how this influences student identities.

Critical Cultural Studies and Theories of Identity

Over the past couple of decades the study of identity has created a "veritable discursive explosion" according to Hall (1996a, p. 1). Questions and theories of identity have been vigorously debated in social theory. Critical cultural studies have been the major contributor to conversations about identity, but other fields have taken part as well. In this section, identity will be conceptualized according to Hall as well as examined in process or how we come to have identities.

Conceptualizing Identity

Historically, identity has been treated as if it is something to be discovered or revealed. In this conversation, identity has been treated as the all-encompassing core of a person—a self we all possess. People experience a series of essences that tell them who they are and to whom they might be tied to because of shared essences. How people categorize themselves reveals an underlying identity and those identities create what feels like a fixed or stable self. Hall (1991) writes,

> The logic of identity is the logic of something like a 'true self'" And the language of identity has often been related to the search for a kind of authenticity to one's experience, something that tells me where I come from. (p. 10)

This is what Hall calls an essentialist way of thinking about identity, and it is referred to as the enlightenment subject or identity. It is this type of thinking that has fallen by the wayside because of the postmodern subject and antiessentialist ways of thinking.

In his speech, delivered to Hampshire College, Hall outlines four disruptions to the notion of a stable identity. The first comes from Marx who decenters the stable self by explaining there are constructions of our identity that we cannot make because of our history. Yes, we make history, but constitutively history makes us.

> We are always constructed in part by the practices and discourses that make us, such that we cannot find within ourselves as individual selves or subjects or identities the point of origin from which discourse or history or practice originates. (Hall, 1991, p. 11)

We cannot pinpoint where any particular identity came from. History has a dialogic relationship between that which is always already there and that which is making the future. Marx disrupts the idea of the sovereign subject because we do not open our mouths to speak the truth because we are always imbricated in the customs and formations of "everybody else's life" (p. 11).

The second disruption of a centered self deals with Freud and the unconscious. Identity is never fully understandable because of the great, unknown quantities of our psychic life, and our inability to reach through the unconscious to the psychic life. Therefore, "We can't read the psychic directly into the social and the cultural. Nevertheless, social, cultural and political life cannot be understood except in relationship to the formation of the unconscious life" (Hall, 1991, p. 11). In the end what this means is that it is impossible to know one's own identity because a) we can never

know our unconscious and b) our identity is constructed by discourses and structures "in a complex relationship with unconscious life" (p. 11).

Hall's third disruption of the self stems from the works of Saussere. Hall (1991) uses Saussere to make the claim that we are "always in language." Our speech—the discourses and enunciations of which we speak—are always set within the conjunctures of language. "In order to speak, in order to say anything new, we must first place ourselves within the existing relations of language" (p 11.) We are always in language because there is nothing spoken, not even an utterance that does not bear traces of past language. Even before we open our mouths to speak, there are vestiges of language from the past. The effect on notions of identity is articulated in Hall's quote that "identity, when one suddenly understands that one is always inside a system of languages that partly speak us, which we are always positioned within and against," takes away the thought or ability people hold of speaking something for the very first time (p. 12). It lessens the uniqueness of an individual if they know they are always speaking parts of what has been already spoken.

Finally, Hall's fourth reason for decentering the self lies in the challenge of truth and rationality in the Western world. Hall says in his speech, "I want to talk about the de-centering of identity that arises as a consequence of the end of the notion of truth as having something directly to do with Western discourses of rationality" (p. 12). Because Western nations have discovered worlds, people, and cultures outside of themselves, the imperializing claim Western society makes about their only being one form of truth falls. This practice is what Foucault calls a "regime of truth." A Western notion of rationality linked with knowledge and power became a totalizing discourse that permitted the

essentialist form of identity to be spoken of as truth. When this regime is disrupted, it takes away from rational claims of absolutism, objectiveness, neutrality, and scientific truths. The effect on identity is that the whole basis of how we thought and acted in the world based on the theory of rationality is changed and now there are multiple truths about everything including our identities, particularly our collective identities.

In addition to explaining how the self of our identity has been decentered, Hall also talks about the collective identities we share—gender, race, class, and nation. These identities also collapse because of great social and political movements that mark this past century and the current one. It used to be that our collective or social identities let us know our position in life and how we located ourselves within these enormous social divisions. An example Hall gives is that of one's national identity and that this identity helped people understand "the pecking order of the universe" (Hall, 1991, p. 12). Americans would be at the top of the pecking order followed by other, older imperializing nations. Collective identities gave people a stable, sense of oneself. However, much of these collective identities have collapsed as well. While Hall does not go into detail over what has exactly disrupted collective identities, if we think about the political and social movements of civil rights, feminism, gay rights; these are events that caused great structural shifts in relationship to society and to each other. This is not to say that people do not describe and are not described by these collective identities, they are. The key is that these collective identities no longer mean one thing and can contradict one another. This is important to this project because a) the student's identities are in transition as they navigate growing up, school, and new experiences and b) students can hold contradictory positions within the institutional structures of education

and schools in particular. Davidson (1996) demonstrated this through her articulation that students hid their collective identities, but also used them to conflict with the identity constructions schools provide.

In the decentering of self, what is left is the notion of the postmodern self. The postmodern self has no claim to a fixed, stable, or permanent self. Instead, identity becomes "a movable feast: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us" (Hall, 1996b, p. 598). For example, education is the cultural system most relevant to this study. The transient nature of identity means that the subject can take on different identities at different times even if they are contradictory. In fact, contradictory identities pull us in different directions so our identifications are constantly shifting. Moreover, the more systems of meanings and cultural representation we encounter, the more confusing the multiplicity of identities become however fleeting these identities are.

Hall provides an important example of what is at stake when we discuss identity. This example illustrates the contradictions of identity. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas, a Black, conservative judge to the Supreme Court. President Bush reasoned that White voters would support him because of Thomas' conservative views, and Black people would support him because he was Black (Hall, 1996b). In essence, the President was playing an "identities game." As the process unfolded, most know that a Black woman, Anita Hill, a former junior colleague of Thomas' came forward and testified that Thomas had sexually harassed her. The hearings quickly turned into a public scandal that polarized America. There were no clear-cut positions that the President had previously expected. As Hall (1996b) wrote:

> Some Blacks supported Thomas on racial grounds, others opposed him on sexual grounds. Black women were divided depending on whether their 'identities' as blacks or as women prevailed. Black men were also divided, depending on whether their sexism overrode their liberalism. White men were divided, depending on not only their politics, but on how they identified themselves with respect to racism and sexism. White conservative women supported Thomas not only on political grounds, but because of their opposition to feminism. White feminists, often liberal on race, opposed Thomas on sexual grounds. And because Judge Thomas is a member of the judicial elite and Anita Hill, at the time of the alleged incident, was a junior employee, there were issues of social class position at work in these arguments. (pp. 600-601)

In the end, Judge Clarence Thomas was narrowly confirmed to the Supreme Court. But what is important about this example is not the outcome, but the effects on how we see identity. For example, the multiple positions people held were contradictory and "they cross cut or 'dislocated' each other" (Hall, 1996b, p. 601). Another result was that there was no master, overriding social identity like class or race that emerged from which people could form their stance. Additionally, this example demonstrates that identification is not assured as it depends upon how a subject is engaged and represented.

Urban students experience conflicts between their identities in a similar fashion to the example Clarence Thomas example. Students have to decide which identities to reveal and which ones to mask depending upon the interaction and context. It is confusing to students of color because it depends on what the situation dictates for what social identities should be presented. Students are forced to choose between their ethnic, social class, and school identities in order to fit in to the mainstream ideologies of school. Hence, by sharing one identity, some of their other collective identities are collapsed or dislocated.

Identities in Process

Thus far, I have discussed how a stable, fixed sense of identity has crumbled and been decentered. Furthermore, examples have been provided as to how our collective identities have also collapsed and can be contradictory in nature. What has not been explored are Hall's complex notions of identity such as how we come to have identities. The purpose of this section is to explain how Hall theorizes the process of people taking on identities; the goal is not to wholly explicate all of Hall's theory of identity. In fact, as more and more work has been done on the theorizing identities, Hall has become increasingly ambivalent about the nature of identity to the point that he asks in an article "Who needs identity?"

It is best to start with some of Hall's major tenets. First, and this has been addressed, identity is "not a thing but a description in language. Identities are discursive constructions that change their meanings according to time, place, and usage" (Barker, 2003, p. 221). This means that our identities are created through discursive structures that may vary in meaning and contexts. Students experience these variations depending upon what meanings are being constructed and how and where. For instance, the participants at a debate tournament experience different discursive constructions than in their debate class.

Second, the approach taken to identification is discursive, always contingent, in process. Identification is "the process of forming contingent and temporary points of attachment or emotional investment which through fantasy, partially suture or stitch together discourses and psychic/emotional forces" (Barker, 2003, p. 442). Identification does not eliminate difference. Hall (1996a) writes, "Identification is, then, a process of

articulation, a suturing, an over determination not a subsumption. There is always 'too much' or 'too little'—an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality" (p. 3). Hall's position here is that identities are not instantly formed. Instead, identities are brought together by multiple discourses including emotional forces at certain points in time. This stitching together does not eliminate different identities to be sutured together nor does it allow for multiple identities to fit precisely together this is why identification is always contingency based and in process. For this project, the participants are stitching together the multiple identities they already have with those offered by a UDL. No one fitting together of identities will happen; however, the participants will suture together those identities that fit best even though they may be contradictory. This means that students will embrace the many identities offered through debate in different ways.

Hall's third tenet has already been stated—there is no unified identity, only those that are fractured, fragmented, and decentered. We know from the decentering of the self and the collapse of collective identities that the identities people experience are not whole. No one can be wholly one thing or one identity. There is always a criss-cross, a dislocation, or a fracture that creates a place for multiple and partial identities to exist. The student-debaters may not completely experience this fracturing and fragmenting at first because the power of becoming a debater gives can at first be all consuming. However, with time, we are able to see cracks in this position of debater and how student-debaters accept parts of one identity offered and reject others so that there is no complete identity of debate.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth tenets all constitute the creation of identities as being inside representation, inside discourse, and inside difference, respectively.

Representation brings together meaning and language to culture; therefore, representation is always constituted within and not outside because meaning is produced between people of a culture. Identities are also created within not outside discourse because discursive events are the means to which we develop identities. And finally, identities are constructed through difference because "only when there is another can you discover who you are" (Hall, 1991, p. 16). These tenets apply to this study because it is only within meaning, language, and difference that identities can be constructed.

Respecting all of Hall's tenets aside, for this project, the question becomes, how do debaters develop identities as a result of their participation in debate especially if there are no solidified identities to be had? The answer lies in how we are produced as subjects. Hall (1996a) defines identity thusly,

> To refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture* between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to "interpellate" speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be "spoken." (p. 6)

For instance, Hall argues that an individual does not participate in an identity simply because he/she occupies that position in a particular discourse; rather, one participates in this identity only when she is interpellated or hailed into that subject position. To interpellate or to hail, means that one is called into place. To hail means to call out. For example, one might hail a person by calling out such as "Hey, you there." To accept this hailing, the person turns and by turning accepts the hailing. In this dissertation, I theorize that students are hailed into the identity of a debater. There is someone hailing the student by saying, "Hey debater?" and the student turning and accepting the hailing because only through acceptance can the subject be discursively described as a debater.

The other part of Hall's definition of identity involves not only the hailing of a

person into place as the social subjects of discourse, but as he wrote, "on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be spoken." It is in this part of Hall's definition, he explains, "identities are thus points of temporary attachment to subject positions which discursive practices construct for us" (Hall, 1996a, p. 6). This means that when discursive practices are tied to temporary attachments of subject positions, identities are formed. Subjectivities are constituted by the subject positions discourse compels us to adopt. This in turns gives a person a place to speak from because we have the identity to do so given by discursive practices. Hailing someone into discursive practices is not enough; there must be a subject position created through discourse that encourages us to accept the hailing. Therefore, when a debater is hailed, there must be an identity or subject position to attach oneself to. For debaters there must be a subject position or identity that one can be hailed as being a debater and that the identity of "debater" means something.

The students in this project could be interpellated into the discursive practices of being a debater because they would not be an already constituted subject and because the student would not have the historical references for identification as a debater. Being a debater involves the use of very specific discourses—types and choices of languages, speaking styles, debate strategies, etc. Thus, students would be constituted in the language and discursive practices of this activity.

Communication Education and Identity Work

One area of communication that may be less predominant, but is no less important, is the study of identity in communication education. Identity is studied in communication education through the investigations of students, teachers and

classrooms. A special issue of the journal, *Communication Education* (2003), was solely dedicated to the study of identity, in which communication education scholars made a case for why this sub-discipline is uniquely positioned to research identity. For the purposes of this study, communication education research is particularly appropriate because this study deals with students and schools.

According to Sprague (1993), speech is tied to the development of our cultural and personal identities. Our identities are created through communication because they are constructed through various contexts as well as linguistic and nonverbal performances (Rubin, 2003). People, in this case, students, speak and act their identities. This is important because we are able to see how identities are situated through the language, choices, and locations made by and for teachers, students, and other authoritarian figures. Our language lets us constitutively shape and be shaped.

Hendrix, Jackson II, and Warren (2003) argue, "classrooms are the nexus where identities commingle" (p. 179). Classrooms create a central hub for students to interact. Some identities are immediately identifiable such as gender, race, class, sexuality, ablism, etc. whereas other identities, such as students' self-identities are revealed through classroom practices. The authors' use the term commingling because it invites the idea that students' identities amalgamate together in order to form a classroom identity, a nexus. Classroom identities help create a place where social and self-identities are explored and created, but are also challenged, changed, and contradicted. Classrooms are an important place to study identities because they are social spaces in which identities are often experimented with and (re)negotiated.

Communication education scholars understand identities as multifaceted, fluid,

and relational as they emerge in communication (Fassett & Warren, 2004; Hendrix, Jackson, & Warren, 2003). Students' and teachers' identities have multiple aspects to them, which defines them as dynamic, adaptable, and facile beings. The fluidity of identities is also recognized by scholars because they are identified as always changing, never static. One can move from one identity to another smoothly without typically garnering a lot of attention unless the identities are contradictory. Language is always changing and thus so is the multifaceted and fluid nature of identities. Additionally, identities are also relational; they do not occur in a vacuum. Instead, language and cultural practices are social in character, meaning identities cannot be formed unless they are constructed through social interactions or practices with others. The key for communication education scholars is that all of these processes take place through communication—speech and nonverbal displays. This type of theorizing is both consistent and relevant to this study. It is consistent because Hall speaks to developing identities through discursive constructions and relevant because identities can be formed based on social interactions or practices with others.

Communication education scholars who study identity typically use a critical epistemology and critical pedagogy to examine how hierarchical and hegemonic institutions such as schools and universities position students. As Fassett and Warren (2007) explain, "communication functions to create, shape, support, sustain, or challenge existing social structures and oppressions" (p. 7). Critical pedagogy is especially foundational in this work because it "focuses on a recognition and understanding of identities as well as democratic practices in educational contexts" (Hendrix, Jackson II, & Warren, 2003, p. 183; Freire, 1998; hooks, 1994). Critical pedagogues have accepted

postmodern, antiessentialist perspectives of identity, of language, and of power, without losing Freire's emphasis on critique or obstructing oppressive regimes of power/knowledge, and social change (Kincheloe, 2008).

The special issue on identity in the journal *Communication Education* contained articles that mainly emphasized teacher identities. In a piece by Johnson and Bhatt (2003), the authors demonstrate through their teachings what the experience of being hailed is like in the classroom. The professors' students interpellated their identities through their bodies and teaching methods. For example, in a lecture on gender, Johnson used her White, middle class lesbian body to allow students to place her in various categories of gender and sexuality by her acceptance of their gaze and subsequent questions. While she attempted to challenge their notions of masculinity, femininity, and sexual identification, she discovered that most students held onto traditional conceptualizations of gender and sexuality, which meant they hailed her as a woman in her thirties, who dressed middle class, and was heterosexual, which she is not. One lone student hailed her as a transsexual.

In another example, Johnson and Bhatt (2003) showed *The Color of Fear*, which is a movie that discusses racism by a variety of people from different races. The movie angered most of the students in the class particularly the White students. The students attempted to hail both instructors as being racist. For Bhatt, she felt she took most of the blame from the students because she is a woman of color who was perceived to share affinity with the non-White positions spoken in the movie. For Johnson, students were upset with her because she did not immediately identify with the Euro-centric views expressed by the White characters. In each case, the instructors were hailed into different

racial identifications.

Johnson and Bhatt (2003) demonstrate the idea of interpellation because of how the students hailed their bodies into certain subject positions, hence identities. Even when presented with evidence to the contrary, the students still held fast to a series of essentialist identities they felt Johnson and Bhatt represented. While Johnson and Bhatt worked to combat these essentialist notions, most of their students did not change their representations of the two professors. Johnson and Bhatt's article serves as an example of how communication education scholars utilize critical cultural perspectives of identity.

As demonstrated, communication education scholars emphasize speech as the creation of identities, recognize the fluidity of identities, and use critical epistemologies to understand power relations between students and hegemonic institutions like schools. While their use of language may be different than say Hall or other critical cultural scholars, communication education researchers believe in antiessentialist notions of identity and work to apply these theories in their classrooms.

After Chapter 7, the next chapter is methodology where the two methods used to analyze this study are explained. Using both portraiture and critical ethnography, this dissertation focuses on students' articulations of the identities offered by a UDL and the tensions that sometimes occur as a result of their participation. Each method is explicated as well as information is provided about the site of the ethnography, the participants in the study, and how the data were analyzed.

CHAPTER 7

CARMINDA: DEBATE, THE GREAT ESCAPE

Carminda is a 19-year-old, Hispanic young woman who is a senior at John Dewey High School. Carminda and I have known each other for 4 years. She was a freshman when I was a 1st-year volunteer for CUDL. I judged one of her first rounds as a debater and remember how attentive she and her partner were to my feedback. After that I always looked for Carminda and Benicia at tournaments so I could say hi and wish them luck. Over the years, I began to hear their names called out as winners at more and more tournaments. When I chose John Dewey High School as my research site, I was excited because I knew I already had a sense of rapport with Carminda and was happy that I would get to know her better. Carminda's story is defined by her home life, her debate life, and her school life.

Carminda grew up in large metropolitan city in a mixed family with both half-brothers and two full siblings. Over the course of our "coffee meetings" at Starbucks, Carminda revealed a lot about her family and how she felt like an outcast in her own home. She explained that

> Since childhood I experienced the favoritism between my sister and actually all my siblings. My dad favored my older brothers because they were his first children and they were boys and they could do car stuff together you know, quote on quote, man stuff. . .then my mom's favorite was my sister, the one that is only two years older then me. Umm that was my mom's first daughter so there is always this secretive favoritism where my mom prefers her a little bit more and helps her a little more or does whatever she wanted and I was just pushed to the

side.

Carminda explained that she has accepted not being the favorite because she can "figure things out on her own." But then the unthinkable happened, Carminda's sister became pregnant at age 14. Carminda describes,

> Once my sister became pregnant it really hurt me a lot more because I was just in this really weird space around my family like I wasn't in my family. I was just gravitating around them just kind of seeing what happened and then latching on for the ride. . . . It really really did change me as a kid, you're in middle school and that's already a really weird time and this happens and you're suddenly feeling unaccepted at home, you're feeling unaccepted at school. It affected me negatively for a really long time.

As a result of these experiences, Carminda became independent and self-sufficient. She depended upon her family as little as possible and although she still sought recognition from them for all of her accomplishments, she came to know that she would not always receive what she was looking for. As such, she depended upon a few important adults in her life, a couple of friends, and even herself to get the feedback she needed.

Debate is also a large part of who Carminda is. Carminda is a talented debater and well known throughout CUDL. At the end of her junior year, Carminda and her partner earned scholarships to UC Berkley's 6-week summer debate camp. It was the first time Carminda had ever flown on an airplane! Attending this camp, set Carminda and her partner up to be very successful their senior year with the goal of making it to the National Championships. I asked Carminda what she liked about debate and she replied:

> I like everything, even the good and the bad. I like that I can compete with people in a way that isn't always negative. Even though we do get a little heated sometimes, the beauty is you can finish that round and shake a hand and even if it's not the utmost honest handshake you know that persons have hard feelings, but it's not like a personal thing it's just trying to advocate whatever we feel we need to or want to. It's just honestly being able to meet up for lunch and laugh it off and even if there are some really competitive rivalries I think they're really healthy because at the end of the day it's what makes us push ourselves.

Carminda describes how debate has affected her schooling. She states,

> I think debate has been a huge influence academically because of debate you have to get good grades, you have to learn all the time, you have to read, you have to know new arguments all the time, you have to push yourself. And we have this rule that you can't debate if you have a certain grade in a class. And so that wasn't really my main motivator, having a certain grade, but I do think debate is what pushed me to open myself up a lot more. I think about being a freshman, I didn't know a lot; I wasn't open to a lot of things but as I went on and grew because of debate I was able to grow more as a student. So I do think my debate career has had a huge influence academically.

When asked about her identity as a student, she described:

> I'm honestly a huge nerd. I seriously study a lot especially if it's something that is important to me, I know that's not always a good thing but if it's important to me I will put my 100% in but uh overall I do try my best. I'm a diligent student and I want to get the A and I push myself. It's really weird to hear myself say that because I wasn't always like that at the beginning of high school I wasn't as motivated as I wish I was because I was going through so much as the years continued I started to get in gear and I was like freaking out and was like trying to always get that extra point and I was studying and tests were always a big deal so I would say I'm a really hardworking student.

In addition to her responsibilities to her family, debate, and school, Carminda worked at various jobs once she turned 16. She worked at Nestle Toll House making cookies and cookie cakes. Carminda enjoyed the creativity of making the cakes for customers. She quickly rose to shift leader because of her work ethic. She also was a waitress at the Seafood Shack where she used her bilingual skills to interact with customers. Finally, the spring before college, Carminda took a job at Auntie Anne's pretzels where once again she was quickly promoted to shift leader. At each of these jobs, Carminda did not work the ordinary 20 hours a week that a typical high school student might work. Instead, she worked at minimum 30-45 hours a week so that she could support herself. She worked these hours on top of being a dedicated student and debater, which also took many hours.

Carminda's senior year was at times difficult because she was shouldering so

many responsibilities. She had to maintain her grades to keep her class rank high for college, she had to prep for debate for hours to ensure she and her partner had a winning record and would win a spot to nationals, she had to work and she had the responsibilities placed on her by her family. All of this made for a confusing time when she went to apply for colleges. Carminda is the first in her family to graduate high school and the first to go to college.

Choosing a college was difficult. At first she settled for a school that was a good school, but was only 45 minutes away from home. She felt like she needed to attend this particular school, so she could continue to help out at home, but she was not excited about it. Despite her being the outcast in her family, Carminda's mother in particular depended upon her heavily to take care of her younger brother, the home, the bills, etc. Her partner Benicia wanted her to attend the school she was going to and continue to be her debate partner. After a lot of pressure from Benicia and a road trip to the school organized by her teacher and debate coach and myself, Carminda decided to attend the same university as Benicia. Even though the university was almost 5 hours from her home, Carminda realized that she needed to make this decision for herself and go where she wanted to.

Carminda's relationship began to change with her parents once she was accepted into college. The following is an excerpt from our interview.

Me: So you're going to be the first in your family to go off to college!
C: Yeah!
Me: How do you feel about that?
C: It's scary because my family doesn't know what happens or what FASFA is or they don't understand why they have to pay for a meal plan, why can't they just send me food (giggle). They're very stubborn, but I know it's because they care. It's really exciting; it's like a spotlight because I'm theonly one to have made it this far so I know that that makes them proud.

> Because I don't think they saw this coming and I think it's shocking to them, so many things happened with my older siblings that they wanted to give up; they definitely weren't as hopeful as they wanted to be and then once I got accepted and I went down to see the school and they realized that is really happening and they were proud of me.

Carminda began to receive some recognition from her family that she so deserved.

Carminda's story would not be complete without knowing if she and her partner made it to the National Championships. Carminda and Benicia worked so hard during the course of the debate season. They won every CUDL tournament except one, which they lost to their biggest rivals, one of whom happened to be Carminda's boyfriend! Unknown to anyone, Carminda and Benicia and the rival team had decided to work together to take out the competition. They cunningly found out what cases the other schools were running and prepped so that they would be able to respond to their arguments. This was not cheating because all teams have to disclose their arguments; it was just very smart thinking. In February, on the weekend of Valentine's Day, the time finally arrived for the Varsity City Championships. The tournament began and immediately Carminda and Benicia won their first two rounds. But, for their third round, they drew their rival team—the one with Carminda's boyfriend. The girls were very nervous because they had never hit this team in competition. The round ended up being quite hilarious because the rival team presented a satire case built off the *Onion* and during prep time they played this satirical version of the song "We Didn't Start the Fire."

Everyone in the audience was laughing. But Carminda got frustrated at one point because she felt the other team was not giving them fair ground to argue from. She had to cross-examine her boyfriend and where she got very assertive and called his team out for unfair grounds. She asked him a series of rapid-fire questions, which he answered and argued back with her. When the 3 minutes of cross examination time was over,

Carminda was quite perturbed, but her boyfriend thought it was funny and before he left the podium, when she was not looking he blew her a kiss! The round was hard fought and the judge took 45 minutes to make his decision! In the end, he voted against Carminda and Benicia so they received their first loss. They couldn't lose again or they would be out of the running for a spot to nationals.

Carminda and Benicia bounced back and quickly made mincemeat of their next competitors. They won their quarter final round and it came down to four schools including John Dewey. Benicia and Carminda were the number two seed while their rival team was number one. The final debates commenced and Carminda and Benicia had a tough match. However, before the match, they had figured out that if the rival team beat the team they were up against, it did not matter if Carminda and Benicia won or lost because they were up against another team from the same school as their rivals. The rules state that two teams from the same school cannot attend nationals together; the teams must be from different schools. Carminda went into the debate wanting to win, but Benicia did not care because they had already figured out they would be going to Nationals. Carminda put up a good fight but without Benicia trying her best, they ended up losing the round and taking 3rd place. This was a bit of a risk because their rival team had to win in order for them to go. But of course, the rival team won so the young women were on their way to the National Championships in Washington, DC. Carminda achieved her dream!

CHAPTER 8

THE WARP AND WEFT OF TWO METHODOLOGIES

The goal of Urban Debate Leagues (UDLs) is to bring the advantages of participation in competitive policy debate, like enhanced GPA and increased likelihood to attend college, to as many urban youth as possible. This was an exploratory study of the ways in which students involved in particular UDL program were exposed to and experimented with a variety of identities. Methods of data collection and analysis emphasized situated experiences and knowledge construction; therefore it was important to select the proper methodology. Qualitative methods allowed for the capture of the situated element nuances, and complexity of student identities. Qualitative methods such as observations, student interactions, and interviews were utilized. This study made use of two qualitative methodologies in order to create an in-depth picture of the students—critical ethnography and portraiture. In this chapter, the following is explained: the two methodologies and means for analysis.

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnographies are traditional ethnographies that address sociopolitical and ethical goals (Thomas, 1993). Similar to descriptive and interpretive ethnographers, critical ethnographers gather qualitative data that provide 'thick descriptions' (Geertz,

1973) and investigate "analyses of how knowledge develops from the discourses, actions, interactions and gestures in a specific social context" (Silverman, 2013, p. 9). However, critical ethnographers highlight power differences, oppression, and injustices in the status quo as well as investigate instances of resistance. Madison (2005) suggests that critical ethnography begins with "an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain" (p. 5).

> The basic assumptions of critical ethnography include:
>
> 1) that power shapes people's experiences, relationships, and everyday occurrences; 2) that marginalization and oppression exist; 3) that surface-level appearances are not always accurate and 4) that social change is possible. (Castagno, 2012, p. 384)

Critical ethnographers assume that people are positioned unequally in society through racism, classism, sexism, etc. The critical ethnographer disrupts the status quo by investigating beneath surface appearances through the identification of underlying and obscure instances of power and control.

Critical ethnography, post-Enlightenment, eschews detached, objective or neutral ways of reporting data. According to Conquergood (1991), traditional ethnography "has been displaced by an alternative project that attempts to understand human conduct as it unfolds through time and in relation to its meanings for actors" (p. 82). Critical ethnographers situate research in its own context in order to see how people are constitutively shaped by societal structures and institutions as well as their own agency. According to Castagno (2012),

> Critical approaches to ethnography attend to both the larger social structures and the agency of individual people and groups of people. Both structure and agency are, therefore, illuminated through data and analysis in critical ethnography. Illuminating structure on the one hand, means showing how economic, political, social, historical, and cultural institutions and norms operate in any given contest and confine the options available to individuals. Illuminating agency, on the other

> hand means highlighting how people are not completely constrained and how our actions are not always determined by structures. (p. 377)

When a critical ethnographer conducts her analysis, she will highlight structure and agency by first, demonstrating how economic, political, social, historical and cultural institutions and norms function in a variety of contexts and limit the choices accessible to people and then second, highlighting agency through the demonstration of a lack of constraints where the oppressive structures do not determine people's actions. Societal structures and agency are determined through the analysis of local practices and patterns as well as global practices and patterns. In keeping with this project, analyses of the intersections of multiple identities are examined through the structure of the UDL program and the students' schools as well as explore instances where students demonstrate agency.

Conducting a critical ethnography goes beyond describing the site of the ethnography and the means for data collection because both of these activities are standard to all ethnographies. It is the types of theories chosen and how they are interpreted, applied and critiqued that guide the research to be critical in nature. Madison (2005) explicates three main aspects of critical ethnography relevant to this study: positionality, dialogue and otherness, and theory versus method.

Positionality

As field researchers, ethnographers take up many positions such as observer, participant-observer, full participant, etc.; however the most important position a critical ethnographer must embrace is that of positionality. In what is called postcritical ethnography, Noblit, Flores and Murillo (2004) define positionality as "the explicit consideration of how their own acts of studying and representing people and situations

are acts of domination even as critical ethnographers reveal the same in what they study" (p. 3). Positionality is vital to a critical ethnographer because it requires that one self-reflect on their own power, position, and privilege and its influence on the research. When a postcritical ethnographer examines her own positionality, she finds herself transparent, and vulnerable to judgment and assessment (Gunzenhauser, 2004). Making oneself accessible invites ethnographers to "take ethical responsibility for our own subjectivity and political perspective, resisting the trap of gratuitous self-centeredness or of presenting an interpretation as if it has no 'self' as though it is not accountable for its consequences and effects" (Madison, 2005, p. 8).

When defining my own positionality, the question I begin with asks what is relevant and important about me as I carry out my research? Who I am as a researcher is determined by who I am as a person. I am a White, lower-middle class, heterosexual female who is highly educated, a former high school teacher, university teaching assistant and currently an adjunct professor. I have very liberal political beliefs and utilize a critical research paradigm. I am drawn to ethnographic studies of students and believe student voices and beliefs are undervalued in communication and educational research. I believe students are mainly oppressed and that schools cause this through institutional and structural racism; however, I also believe in the creation of oppositional behaviors that resist this oppression. Our educational system is troubling to me because it is not the great equalizer everyone claims it to be and it is disproportionately harmful to underrepresented populations; however, an education beyond high school often leads to the gaining of social mobility and cultural capital. It is hard for me to reconcile the recommendation for students to stay in school when they are being hurt by schools, while

knowing an education is necessary to succeed in life. This is why I am very interested in alternative programs and pedagogies that work either within or outside of the system that help students find their place in education and allow them to become successful.

Being a White woman studying an urban setting is important to address because I am afforded authority and access easily, yet, I must be continuously aware of how my White body influences the participants and the setting. While I try to minimize my authority with students through several strategies, it is possible that my Whiteness elicits positive responses from members of my research site because of a power imbalance and need to please or appease the White woman who may be perceived as interfering in their schooling. I struggle with Whiteness and White guilt so for me my White body is something I think about in my interactions with students. However, as much as I think about it, I am also worried that if too much attention is placed on my White body, then the research becomes about me and not about the students. I do not want anything to be taken away from the students and their experiences. They are the focus of this study.

Dialogue and Otherness

Critical ethnography requires an in-depth and enduring dialogue with the Other. While one must still attend to his or her positionality, we must also attend to our subjectivity in relationship to the Other. "We are not simply subjects, but we are subjects in dialogue with the Other" (Madison, 2005, p. 9), meaning when we encounter the Other there is a negotiation and dialogue that offers substantial meanings, which influence the Other's world. Conquergood, throughout his corpus of work, theorizes dialogue as a performance with the goal being a dialogical performance, which brings the self and Other together "so that they may question, debate, and challenge one another" (as cited in

Madison, 2005, p. 9). Dialogue is devoted to maintaining openness between the conversations with the researcher and the Other so that the dialogue becomes reciprocal as well as maintains an ongoing liveliness that can be described as the "ethnographic presence."

> Dialogue moves from the ethnographic *present* to ethnographic *presence* by opening the passageways for readers and audiences to experience and grasp the partial presence of a temporal conversation constituted by the Other's voice, body, history, and yearnings. (Madison, 2005, p. 10)

An ethnographic presence changes over time and is not a stagnant artifact collected by an ethnographer, which is a criticism of ethnography.

In this dissertation, Dialogue and Other is an important concept because dialogue with the Other or the student-debaters is the most frequent way data were generated. Much of my time in the field was spent establishing dialogue with the students. Dialogue occurred when conversations became reciprocal and ongoing between the students and me so that we created meaning(s) together. For instance, in the case of Carminda, our interactions, conversations, and negotiations were continuous and pushed us both to consider who we were and were becoming. I maintained an ethnographic presence by keeping windows for conversations open where the Other's voice, body, history, etc. could be shared. In the writing of this dissertation, I attended to how dialogue with the Other changed over time and worked to capture conversations as temporal and ongoing.

Theory versus Method

In addition to defining critical ethnography and establishing one's positionality, another issue to explore about critical ethnography is the nexus between theory and method. Social scientists and early modernists have always held tight to the division of theory versus method; however, ethnographic practice blurs the lines between the two.

Ethnographers utilize theory at several levels during analysis including:

> to articulate and identify hidden forces and ambiguities that operate beneath appearances; to guide judgments and evaluations emanating from our discontent; to direct our attention to the critical expressions within different interpretive communities relative to their unique symbol systems, customs, and codes; to demystify the ubiquity and magnitude of power; to provide insight and inspire acts of justice; and to name and analyze what is intuitively felt. (Madison, 2012, p. 15)

In order to utilize theory in these ways, methods are needed to provide guidelines, modes of analysis, or a series of steps to follow. Theory becomes a method when it is used as a form of interpretation when there is an established set of behaviors that are tied to a specific scene and are necessary to finish a task.

Theory and method are the same when ethnography is used as an analytical tool. Murillo, Jr. (2004) puts it best, when he writes,

> Theory is linked to methods, and methods to the scenes studied, grounding one's work. The methods rely heavily on direct observation (participant observation), open-ended interviewing and textual analysis of human products. However, the degree and extent of utilization of each of these methods depend on the researcher's purposes, the guiding questions, theoretical framework, and the scene itself. (as cited in Madison, 2005, p. 157)

Theories are methods when they provide the guiding principles of the research and methods are theories when they are interpretive. In essence, "critical ethnography becomes the 'doing' or the 'performance' of critical theory. It is critical theory in action" (Madison, 2012, pp. 16-17).

In this project, the theories of identity expressed were the guiding principles of my research questions, observations and interviews, and vice versa the observations and interviews guided the expressed theories of the research project. For example, I argued that students were interpellated into the identity of debater. My research questions, observations, and particularly my interview questions focused on ascertaining what social

actions or behaviors could be considered identities offered by the participation of the students in the UDL. The methods of research questions, observations and interviews were an interpretation of the theory; the theory guided the methods. Madison (2012) states that "when designing interview questions or coding data, theory may inspire and guide, but it is a methodological process that directs and completes the task" (pp. 16-17). As such, theory and method go hand in hand.

Portraiture

Portraiture is the joining of art and science. It is a type of qualitative research "that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). Portraiture blends methods including life history, naturalist inquiry and most distinctly ethnographic methods. As stated by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, "portraiture represents the essence of what we endeavor to do in social science: to (re)present the research participant through the subjective, empathetic, and critical lens of the researcher" (p. 10). By collecting and interpreting people's practices and experiences, the portraitist accesses the voices and visions of the participants within a specific social and cultural context. The narrative is weaved between the portraitist and the subject through negotiated dialogue so it is constantly evolving and being shaped through discourse.

In order to negotiate that dialogue, the researcher must demonstrate a high level of reflexivity because the role of the researcher is more prominent in the narrative process. Portraitists create narratives through collected data, but they also impose themselves by looking for a central story or set of themes that they then write about. Reflexivity

according to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) is about the "identity, character, and history of the researcher" these characteristics are crucial to "the manner of listening, selecting, interpreting, and composing the story" (p. 13). Portraitists are more visible because they are responsible for "defining the focus and field of inquiry, but also in navigating relationships with the subjects, witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing emergent themes and in creating the narrative" (p. 13). Thus, portraiture acknowledges the essential role of the self of the researcher.

Portraiture first starts with the concept of goodness. Typically research starts out by asking what is wrong with a particular phenomenon and what can be diagnosed. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) refer to this as starting from a place of disease and pathology. For example, most education research begins with education reform or fixing what is wrong with education. Research that starts with the concept of failure is facile, meaning it is easier to identify failures than "to find those moments of resistance and negotiation that ultimately lead to success" (Dixson, Chapman & Hill, 2005, p. 18). Goodness begins in a different place--that of health and resilience. Starting from a place of goodness involves identifying "measurable school indices as well as qualities that are more elusively captured in the words and actions of the actors," while still recognizing imperfections, vulnerabilities and weaknesses people negotiate (p. 23).

There are five essential elements of portraiture: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and aesthetic whole. Each of these will be further elucidated in the data analysis section but here is a brief synopsis. Context is a reference point to situate participants in time and space so that there is a resource for understanding what is said and done. Another element of portraiture is the concept of voice. Voice is described as

an epistemological stance, sociopolitical position, and as a methodological stance. Another aspect of portraiture is the building of relationships with the participants. Relationships between researcher and participants are fluid, evolving and often reciprocal. Relationships are a form of data gathering and are key to the "empirical, ethical, and humanistic dimensions of research design" (Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 138). Next, emergent themes are the fourth aspect of portraiture and it is the place where interpretation of the data begins. The interpretation process is interactive and generative; the portraitist develops a thematic framework in order to construct the narrative. The final step is developing the aesthetic whole or shaping the narrative. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) use the metaphor of weaving a tapestry to describe how to create the aesthetic whole because "the image allows for various configurations of color, texture, and design as well as a clear structure of overlapping thread (the warp and the weft)" (p. 247). In order to build the aesthetic whole, or tapestry, four elements are considered: conception, structure, form, and coherence.

Similarities Between Critical Ethnography and Portraiture

Critical ethnography and portraiture are similar in five ways. Overall, the two methodologies were situated after the postpositive turn and called the "new ethnography" or the seventh movement (Dixson, Chapman & Hill, 2005). According to Denzin (2003), this turn or movement is categorized by "notions of subjectivity, perspective, reflexivity, and 'messy texts' [which] are more transparent in the research process" (as cited in Dixson, Chapman, & Hill, 2005, p. 16). Second, both methods employ a critical epistemology. This is clear when describing critical ethnography, but it can also be associated with portraiture when critical, feminist or critical race theory etc. theories are

employed. This project takes a critical stance on identity theory. Third, and at the most basic level, critical ethnography and portraiture share common methods of collecting data, "sharing many of the techniques, standards, and goals of ethnography" (p. 13). They both utilize observations, participant observations, and interviews. Fourth, both employ positionality/reflexivity. While these two terms do not mean exactly the same thing, it is clear from the research that both methodologies require the researcher to consider her influence in the creation of the research project including the recognition of the power and position one holds as well as her privilege. Fifth, data is produced through negotiated dialogue. There is an element of the co-creation of meaning between the researcher and the participants in both methods.

Site of Study

The focus of this critical ethnographic project was on participants in an urban debate league. The Carlinville Urban Debate League (CUDL)[2] worked with high school students in the Carlinville School District (CSD), one of the largest urban school districts in the Southern United States serving over 150,000 students in almost 200 individual schools. The district covered over 300 city square miles ("Anonymous," 2009). It is not uncommon to see school busses on major highways bringing students to and from school. CUDL worked with approximately 20 high schools and served almost 1,000 students at the high school and middle school level.

Ranked in the top 10 schools for the highest dropout rates from 2006-2010, Carlinville reports that it graduates approximately 80% of their students. However, when

[2] All names and places are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the people, schools and the organization.

a careful analysis was taken of how many freshmen entered high school and how many graduated in 4 years, the dropout percentage moved down to 41% ("Anonymous," 2009-2010). To put this in perspective, in 2009, 14,600 students entered ninth grade and only 6,300 students graduated 4 years later. Dropping out was a normative part of the school culture for students.

The demographic make-up of CSD revealed a district with under-represented students as being the majority and having high poverty rates. A breakdown of the school by race revealed that the largest percentage of students are Hispanic/Latino at 68.8%, followed by 24.5% African Americans; Whites make up 4.6%, and Asians, Pacific Islanders, and American Indians make up less than 2% of the student population ("Anonymous," 2009-2010). Furthermore, 80% of CSD students received free or reduced lunch, which meant that those students lived at or below the federal poverty line which is just under $12,000 for an individual and $25,000 and under for a family of three or four ("Poverty Guidelines," 2015).

Participants' High School

The participants of this project attended John Dewey High School on the North side of Carlinville. The high school enrollment was quite large with 2, 266 students attending. Carlinville's student demographics included: 74.3% Hispanic, 12.5% African American, 11.2% White, .1% American Indian, and 1.9% Asian/Pacific Islander. Over 68% of students received free or reduced lunch ("Anonymous," 2009-2010).

John Dewey High School was considered one of the "nicer" high schools in CSD. "Nicer" would be a term used by students and faculty from across CSD. While many other high schools in CSD were in disrepair, John Dewy High School was a very large,

modern building that even had a new wing added recently. Even though it has 20 portable classrooms, the portable classrooms were in good shape with clean tile floors and freshly painted walls; however, most classes were offered in the main building. John Dewey was also located in a suburban area and was surrounded by four elite private schools. Property values in some places were very high in the area surrounding the school, while others were very low. This resulted in a schism between the more elite White students and poorer students from underrepresented populations.

My Involvement With CUDL

I have been involved with CUDL for the past 4 years. I served as a judge and volunteer, a mentor, an informal observer, a chaperone, and an office manager. I know many of the students who participated in the program if not by name at least by team or by face. While I am friendly with all the students and worked to get to know more of them at each tournament, there were certain students I made sure to seek out at tournaments to check in with. I often asked them how the tournament was going or how school was, and if I knew anything else about them that occurred outside of school I always asked about that. For instance, several students played in a band so I made sure to ask about that. I also talked a lot about college and asked if they were taking their tests and where they would like to go to school. CUDL was committed to getting every student to go to college. While I sought many students out, many sought me out as well. They often wanted to chat, or had a question, or were concerned about something at the tournament. Often they complained about being judged unfairly and wanted me to tell the director. They saw me as a confidant or someone to console them. Some wanted to know about college and graduate school, which I was happy to talk about. I always

offered to read college essays or help students negotiate the financial aid process. In general, I was well known to the CUDL students and they knew me at minimum as a presence at all CUDL related events.

Participants

The debate class I observed contained approximately 13 students—7 girls and 6 boys. Depending on the day or if there is an after school practice, there were approximately 22 students—12 girls and 11 boys. With 22 students, John Dewey's team would be considered a medium to large team by CUDL standards. Of the students who are in the class daily, 61% were Hispanic, 38% were White and 1% was African American. The demographics of the students who are officially in the class somewhat resemble the population of John Dewey High School because Hispanics made up the greatest number of students; however, the next largest population should be African Americans, but instead White students made up 38% of the class.

Primary Participants

Four of the students became my primary participants for this study with two more choosing to actively participate but not as fully as the others. The four students were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the project and the rapport developed over time in the field. The students included Carminda, Carlos, Joseph, and Xavier. These students were willing to participate in ongoing dialogue and interviews; therefore, they became the students whose portraits became the main data for the study. The two other students, Benicia and Jaquelina, participated in one interview and many informal conversations.

The two students I knew the best were Carminda and Benicia; they were an all-

female team who had been debating together for 4 years. This is a rarity because a) there were few all girl teams at the varsity level, b) rarely did students keep the same partners for 4 years, and c) there were few students in CUDL who have debated all 4 years. Carminda and Benicia were also captains of the debate team at John Dewey, which meant they were responsible for teaching the rest of the team members. These young women were so talented that they won every tournament of the season save one and qualified to debate at the NAUDL National Championships where they debated against other qualifiers from every urban debate league across the country. My rapport with both girls was very strong since I had known them for 4 years. I was one of the first judges they encountered as 1st-year debaters. Not only did they greet me each day, we always found time to talk personally at some point during class and had several meetings outside of school at Starbucks or a local restaurant. I wrote letters of recommendation for both young women for scholarships and college admissions. We also took a 2-day trip to the university they chose to attend. Carminda and Benicia were very open with me regarding debate, CUDL, and their personal lives.

Carlos and Joseph were the next set of informants. Both young men attended Winston Middle School, which had one of the best middle school debate programs in CUDL; this gave them a year or two of experience before coming to high school. Carlos and Joseph were very confident and independent, but acted slightly insular as a team because they did not know anyone else. They only really interacted with each other and one other novice team. Next to Benicia and Carminda, Carlos and Joseph were most open to my observing them debate at tournaments. We developed a strong relationship over the course of the debate season. My contact with them included consistent in class

conversations, driving them home from tournaments, and having dinner at Carlos' house as well as interview meetings at a local pizza parlor.

My next informant lost his partner midway through the season, but continued to debate with various other partners. Xavier and I were very close. There was something about Xavier's personality and mine that really allowed me to get to know him and establish a relationship with him. Xavier always greeted me, asked for my input, or laughed at my jokes. We talked about literature and books all the time. He was always interested in my dissertation, especially the observational notes I took in class and at tournaments. They made him laugh. Outside of school, I drove him home from tournaments twice and also went out to eat a couple of times for interviewing purposes.

The remainder of the students I knew by name, but spent little time interacting with. They were juniors and seniors and they isolated themselves in the corners of the classroom where they laughed and joked around. They rarely did work of any kind and they debated rarely. Almost every day, they left class early, as much as 15 minutes to a half hour before the class period ended. Mrs. Taylor, their teacher, did not typically say anything to stop them. I tried several strategies to get to know them, but was always met with quiet resistance; therefore, I interacted on a polite level of acknowledgement with them, but nothing more.

Data Collection

This project involved the use of customary ethnographic data collection practices such as observations, one-on-one interviews, and field notes (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Madison, 2005). The next sections delineate explanations of these methods.

Informed Consent

IRB approval for this project was obtained December 27, 2012, but no data were collected until fall of 2013. Data were collected with students from John Dewey High School during debate class, after school practices, at tournaments and at local restaurants or coffee shops. Students received assent and parental consent forms to sign at the beginning of my initial data collection. The purpose and procedures of the study were described in clear and accessible language so that the students understood and were able to assist their parents in understanding. The forms were written in both English and Spanish, and students chose which format best suited them and their families. In going over the forms, both the relationship between their assent and parental consent was emphasized. In other words, I explained that if their parents said, "No" and the student said, "Yes," he or she could not participate and if their parents said, "Yes" and the student said, "No," they would not have to participate. No planned interactions with students who did not submit a signed consent/assent form occurred.

Researcher Position

For much of the time, I acted as a general observer especially in the beginning. General observations included situating myself somewhere in the classroom where an activity was taking place and either with my computer or with hand-written notes, I recorded what I was seeing, hearing, doing, etc. My goal with general observations was to represent the students "doings" in their own words as best as possible.

In order to negotiate my position in the classroom, I engaged in several behaviors. First, when I introduced myself, I had the students call me Sara and not Miss Mathis in order to try to downplay at least superficially my authoritarian figure. This did not really

work because Mrs. Taylor kept calling me Miss Mathis, so the students followed her lead. Second, I emphasized that I was a student too, and I wanted to learn from them if they permitted me. Third, I minimized all encounters where I would be considered the authoritarian in the classroom. I did not tell students what to do; I did not correct their behavior; I did not tattle on them if they were misbehaving. Fourth, I answered all of their questions and provided help when asked. When asked for help, I worked to relate to the students as more of a peer so sometimes I provided the answer, other times the students and I worked together to come up with the answer, and sometimes I had to find the student a different peer because I did not know the answer. Fifth, I acted like the open, approachable, knowledgeable funny self that I am in almost all contexts of my life. I have a knack for establishing rapport with people—adults, teens and children alike. Relating to others is a part of who I am; however I was under no illusion that any of these negotiations actually changed my positionality, but they did allow me to build rapport with the students.

Once the students were used to my presence, I acted as an observer-participant where I still continued to observe, but began helping some of the novice students with their debate preparations. Gradually, the amount of time I spent observing switched to increased participation. This was accomplished by engaging students through speaking and listening, asking questions, providing comments when solicited, and getting to know the students as more than just "students" or "debaters." All of these actions helped me establish rapport with the students and the more the rapport increased the more I was able to participate in the setting. The one limiting factor I experienced as a participant was that I could never fully participate because I obviously was not a high school debater so

during tournaments I had to move back into the observer role. In sum, I moved through a variety of researcher positions depending on the activity.

Field Notes

Field notes take many forms; in their end state, they are written so that the researcher "can re-enter the scene of the action and of the research at a later date" (Anderson, 1987, p. 341). Field notes originate as scratch notes and headnotes. Scratch notes are quickly taken notes on a particular event or interaction. Headnotes are mental notes that are a focused memory of an event that one may have been participating in or the situation did not allow for note taking. What is most important about these notes is that they are written up as quickly as possible so that the details and sequences are not lost in the researcher's mind. Scratch notes and headnotes are taken at each fieldwork session. Approximately 10 double-spaced pages should be generated for each hour in the field (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Field notes are written up into a chronological record of the field event with questions and asides the researcher generates added to the account.

Field notes for this project focused on developing scratch and head notes into a full rendering of the field observation session. I strived for thick description in each interaction. Since my goal was to establish full participation as much as possible, this required reliance on a lot of head notes and a well-trained memory. I set aside time directly after my fieldwork sessions to record my head notes and combine my scratch notes into a fully prepared field note. A hard copy and an electronic copy were generated for each field note.

Individual Interviews

Interviews were scheduled as often as possible. This frequency of contact helped to document the changes the students were undergoing as they became more involved in the debate process. Debate class was the last period of the day and there were informal practices after school so I utilized those times to meet with students. I also took students out for food and conducted interviews at various restaurants. Most of the students who participated in the study received free lunch so eating out was a treat for them. All interviews were audiotaped and a protocol for how questions would be asked and answered was discussed before the audiotaping began. That protocol included, first, making students aware that their participation was voluntary at all times. They were reminded that they were not required to answer all questions asked. If a participant did not want to participate anymore, a code word would be invoked when a student wished to end their participation. I generated a typed set of questions for all individual interviews; these questions operated as a loose guide when I was interviewing. Additionally, it was reinforced that this was not a one-way interview, plenty of questions should be asked of me. Different answers or opinions were encouraged and accepted as stated.

Students were asked a variety of types of questions—mainly open-ended and follow up questions. Many of the questions were "grand tour" types of questions, which are defined as "how an activity or event usually transpires from start to finish or how a social setting is organized" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 195). Grand tour questions were important for purposes of my research because I was asking how the enactment of policy debate, particularly debate at tournaments, influenced their identities. This involved asking a question like "What was it like to debate at this past tournament?" Follow up

probing and guiding questions were asked about specific details stated and those that were left out.

Transcripts from interviews were generated as soon as possible. Copies of transcripts were made available to the students for their review in case they wanted to edit or add to something they said or did not say. All data were kept on a password protected external hard drive, which was kept in a locked file cabinet in my home.

Data Analysis Procedures: Part One

This project generated a relatively large mass of data because of the combination of field notes and interview transcriptions. Identifying approaches to data analysis that was equipped to handle the size and complexity of this data set was critical to the credibility of this project. My analyses stemmed from critical and identity theory and emergent themes. As previously discussed, critical ethnographers use theory as method. Theory becomes a method when it is used to analyze the data using the guiding set of principles of the theory. There are no specific steps all critical ethnographies follow. Instead, researchers look for the following: underlying meanings of participants' discourses and actions; marginalization and oppression; instances of power; and acts of resistance. This is in no way an exhaustive list that critical ethnographers utilize. This project already assumed the marginalization of students and the inherent power differentials. Using critical theory, specifically ways of examining identity, I looked at how the UDL program offered identities to student-debaters. Issues of race, gender, class, whiteness, and resistance were also a few of the aspects examined.

In order to analyze the data and conduct the critical ethnography, I first took the data and utilized the method of portraiture. Following the essential elements of

portraiture, I wrote four 25-page "portraits:" one for each of the primary participants. These portraits were used as the primary data for analysis along with my field notes and transcripts from interviews. In the next sections I describe each of the five essential elements and how I used them to build the portraits that are excerpted in this dissertation.

Context

The context of the documentation of participants' experiences is important because it provides an understanding of people's actions in time and space. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) wrote, "We have no idea how to decipher or decode an action, a gesture, a conversation or an exclamation unless we see it embedded in context" (p. 41). Portraitists examine context in five different ways. First, the physical setting is considered because it evokes all the senses and provides a macro level of abstraction to understand participants' behaviors. Second, is the personal context where the researcher sets up her own position so that "the place and stance of the researcher are made visible and audible" (p. 50). Third, the historical context is considered and this involves identifying the institutional culture and history. Next, the context is examined for symbols and metaphors expressed by the participants, which the researcher identifies and uses to create the portrait. Finally, how the context is shaped is considered. It is important to recognize how the participants shape the context and are shaped by it.

I applied the different aspects of context to the data by describing the multiple settings I observed and interacted with the participants in. Depending upon the activity, my own position was either one where I observed or interacted or listened. Using multiple positions helped me develop a sense of the school, the debate team, and the individual debaters' sense of culture. Because the students engaged in multiple

interviews with me, I began to see some patterns and metaphors that I used in the portrait. For example, Joseph's consistent references to grades and "getting a good education" are one expression that helped define who Joseph is. Finally, what was most interesting at least about one part of the context was how the students were shaped by debate and then how they shaped debate. In the beginning, the participants read through the arguments provided to them and used them as they were intended, but by mid-season, the debaters had determined how to shape the arguments according to their beliefs and arguments.

Voice

While the term, *voice*, evokes many meanings, portraiture highlights the portraitist's voice and how it shapes the overall narrative created. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) highlight six ways that voice is used. First is voice as witness which places the portraitist at the boundaries of a scene so that she may take in the "details of behavior, expression, and talk . . .[while] remaining open and receptive to all stimuli" (p. 87). Voice as interpretation is the second subcomponent and its purpose is for the portraitist to generate low and high inference meanings of the communication and actions of the participants. Third, voice is classified as preoccupation, which the authors describe as the way in which the portraitist's observations and texts are constructed by the assumptions, background, and theoretical perspectives of the portraitist. Next, voice is seen as autobiography where the portraitist seeks a balance between the reporting of the participant's actions and the influence of the portraitist's self. The fifth form of voice investigated deals with discerning the voices of others. This is where the portraitist hones in on the participant voices and examines them for "timbre resonance, cadence, and tone of their voices, their message, and their meaning" (p. 99). Finally, voice in dialogue is

the last type of voice the authors identify. Voice in dialogue refers to the interplay between actor and researcher as they create dialogue together.

Identifying aspects of voice was a large part of crafting the portraits. I spent a lot of time interpreting the behaviors and identities of the participants and analyzing the data they provided using the research questions of the study. My voice is visible through the questions asked in interviews and the behaviors noted through observations and how I brought the two together to tell the participant's story. I worked hard to preserve the manner in which the student's spoke. For example, Xavier's excerpt clearly demonstrates his voice and his messages and meanings.

Relationship

Relationship refers to:

> *All* the processes of portraiture require that we build productive and benign relationships. It is through relationships between the portraitist and the actors that access is sought and given, connections made, contracts of reciprocity and responsibility (both formal and informal) developed, trust built, intimacy negotiated, data collected, and knowledge constructed. (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 135)

Relationships are seen as "complex, fluid, symmetric, and reciprocal" (p.137). There are three aspects of relationships including the search for goodness, empathetic regard, and reciprocity and boundaries. I have previously defined the search for goodness; therefore, only the second two aspects will be elucidated. Empathetic regard simply means that the portraitist tries to put herself in the position of the participant and develop an understanding of her perspective. "Empathy is seen as the channel of emotional resonance, the vehicle for gaining deep understanding" (p. 147). Next, reciprocity and boundaries need to be set as familiarity grows between portraitist and actor.

I built really strong relationships with all my participants, but most especially

with Carminda. Carminda and I share many personality traits, like being introverts, and commonalities in our life stories such as having rough childhoods. It is difficult to describe my relationship with Carminda because it was at times very symmetric and reciprocal, but at the same time I was always balancing boundaries of being a researcher and being an adult. Yet my level of empathy for her was so strong and I knew even when words failed her what she was trying to say about all she has gone through. I worked hard to develop reciprocity by writing letters of recommendation for her and helping her with college applications, FAFSA and her taxes and she would give me further insight into what I was seeing in my research.

Emergent Themes

Emergent themes are the first step in the interpretation and analysis of the data collected. Emergent themes are an interactive and generative practice where the researcher identifies convergent and dissonant threads for the construction of the narrative. The process "is a disciplined empirical process of description, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis—and aesthetic process of narrative development (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 185). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) construct emergent themes using five steps. First, repetitive refrains are sought out including those perspectives that seem to deviate from the norm because the deviant voice often helps us see convergent threads more clearly. Portraitists look for those themes that are consistently shared by the participants. Second, resonant metaphors are sought out because this type of language envelops a great deal of human experience revealing central themes to the portraitist. Third, institutional and cultural rituals are examined for the values, priorities, and stories they tell. The fourth step to constructing emergent

themes involves the use of triangulation where the portraitist looks for points of convergence in multiple types of data. Finally, in order to reveal patterns that have not been established through triangulation, portraitists examine the chaos and lack of agreement in order to try and establish underlying patterns.

In this dissertation, discovering, compiling, shaping emergent themes was really important because this prepared the portraits for analysis. At first, I did not think I would find any themes because the data were so diverse from participant to participant, but by using my research and interview questions I began to see patterns emerge. And then in order to triangulate with my field notes and interview transcripts, many themes were reinforced and some were not. For example, it became clear that the participants embraced several different identities through their participation in the UDL, but there were also patterns that indicated tensions with these identities so I had to acknowledge and support this lack of agreement. This was the most important step for me in this process because it set the stage for developing an aesthetic whole.

The Aesthetic Whole

The aesthetic whole is the final step in the analysis process. In forming the aesthetic whole, "the portraitist seeks a portrayal that is believable, that makes sense, that causes 'click of recognition.' We refer to this as 'Yes, of course,' experience as resonance and we see the standard as one of authenticity" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 247). The metaphor best used to describe the process of developing the aesthetic whole is that of weaving a tapestry. There are four components that must be addressed to build the aesthetic whole: conception, structure, form, and coherence. Conception is the place where the overarching story is built by drawing from emergent themes and weaving

them together. "Once identified and articulated, the conception both embraces and shapes the development of the narrative…through repetition, reflection, reiteration (of themes, stories, illustrations) (pp. 247-249). Next, Structure is the scaffolding that holds the overarching story together. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) use the metaphor of the girders that hold up a tall building to describe how the structure decides the shape and character of the edifice. The third component used for developing the aesthetic whole, is form.

> Form is the texture of intellect, emotion and aesthetics that supports, illuminates, and animates the structural events. Standing alone, the scaffold is stark, bare, unwelcoming—unconvincing in its abstraction. But form—expresses in stories, examples, illustrations, illusions, ironies—gives life and movement to the narrative, providing complexity, subtlety, and nuance to the text, and the offering the reader opportunities for feeling identified and drawn into the piece. (p. 254)

Form illuminates the narrative being created through conception and structure. Coherence is the last component. Coherence is the sum of adding together conception, structure and form. "The portraitist shapes the aesthetic whole by developing narrative coherence, which includes the framing and sequencing of events and experiences and articulation and consistent voice and perspective" (p. 256).

Writing the portraits, or the creation of the aesthetic whole, was at first very daunting because there were all these emergent themes and finding a way to put them all together in a way that provided structure, form and coherence so that I could say that there was resonance between what I had woven together and incorporated the authenticity of the participant was difficult. I relied heavily at first on the interview questions for structure and then I slowly deviated from the questions because I began to see the metaphors developing in the participant's narratives. I then wove the narratives into one nuanced portrait.

Data Analysis Procedures: Part Two

The procedures I followed for coding and recognizing emergent themes in the data was a nine-step process. First, all the data were read through including field notes and interview transcriptions. Second, I took the interview transcriptions and began initially coding for similar experiences, phrases, behaviors, etc. I used multicolored post it notes to identify these initial themes. Third, I then reanalyzed the initial list of emergent themes and looked for similarities and differences, which lead to a revision in the list of emergent themes. Fourth, I then used my field notes for comparison and contrast as well as to add more themes. Fifth, when the examination of the data was exhausted, I then began the process of writing up the portraitures for each participant following the steps explicated above. Once I had written the students' portraits, for the seventh step, I then began the coding process for emergent themes again, this time paying close attention to how the portraits and field notes data answered or did not answer the research questions. The final two steps were spent organizing the data into coherent headings and ensuring that all the data had been exhausted.

The next two chapters present the analysis of the data. The chapters are divided by research question; therefore, Chapter 9 answers what identities were offered and Chapter 10 explores how those identities caused tensions amongst the students' multiple identities.

CHAPTER 9

WATCH ME GO CONFIDENTLY: IDENTITIES IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Thus far we have reviewed literature related to debate, UDLs, and academic identity as well as examined theories of identity and explored the methodologies of this study. This chapter presents the analysis of the first research question posed. The research question asks, "What identities do students experience through participation in an Urban Debate League?" This is an important research question because of its theoretical context, empirical importance, and the data used for analysis.

First, one can ask, "What theories is the research question set in?" The concept of identity and how students take up identities that are offered to them is the main way this study is situated. In this study, identity has been theorized as fluid, multifaceted and relational. It also has been looked at as a process of interpellating students into an identity. Utilizing the theory of interpellation explains how students are called into the identity of debate. Additionally, the research question also opens up the theoretical possibility of seeing how identities are experimented with and created as the result of participation in high school debate. Second, when considering this research question, it is important to establish its empirical importance. When answered, this research question tells us what identities have been offered and developed as a result of participating in this

particular UDL program. Without answers to this question, we cannot surmise the influence of the program. This study began with the awareness that most research reports that UDL students become better, more able and more successful students; as such the goal of the project is to observe the experimentations and reflections that occur from those students who participated in the study. More importantly, this question is understood through the students' interpretations. It is the students' own behaviors and experiences that are presented. This practice makes this question even more significant because the analysis is built from the students' accounts.

Finally, the data analysis used to explore this question is uncommon because while it is supported by observations and field notes, the analysis is drawn from the portraitures developed from the four primary informants of the study. The portraitures were created from the multiple lengthy interviews and time spent with these four students over the span of the debate season, approximately 9 months. The data set is unique because it utilizes portraitures that have been co-created with the student and the researcher.

Overview of the Chapter

After careful analysis of the data, this chapter examines the identities the participants experimented with and sometimes committed to while participating in CUDL. Two main types of identities that emerged were a "debater identity" and an "academic identity." The debater identity was connected to participants' direct participation in debate. The other identity, academic, was connected to broader explorations of a debater identity. Additionally, one other type of identity was presented, a "CUDL identity," which was developed through participation in that particular UDL.

There were six components that built the debater identity of the participants and those include establishing oneself as a debater, expressing oneself, possessing a winning team history, experiencing winning and losing, identifying the meaning of losing, and establishing a team image. From the other identity, academic, four categories emerged including the usefulness of debate, the influence of grades and college, school involvement, and the definition of an academic identity. Finally, CUDL identities were explored and separated into two different categories—a predictable platform and different types of behaviors. The following is a detailed account of how these identities were experienced by the primary informants.

Debater Identity

"It's Official!"

One of the first behaviors I noticed that invited students to explore an invitation to take on a "debater identity" was when the students received the core files from CUDL from me. As discussed in Chapter 4, core files are the evidence packets that novice and junior varsity debaters are required to debate with. An excerpt from my field notes references this experience.

> I brought John Dewey their core files today. I have access to them because I am the Office Manager for CUDL so instead of making the students wait until their coach could pick them up, I chose to bring them myself. I know they will be excited. I enter the classroom and ask for help to bring them in, as the boxes are quite heavy. Carlos and Joseph volunteer. As soon as they get back into the room, they grabbed a novice packet and ripped it open. Everyone else came up quickly to get the files as well. The excitement in the room is permeable. There are shrills of excitement and groans of anguish over what evidence the packets contain and what the students are liking and not liking. All the students are completely focused on the core files. They flip through them constantly examining different parts of the files. No one is focused on anything else. It's as if they have been transported to another world. I've never seen them so engaged.

The possession of the files made it conclusive that the students were now officially

(CUDL) debaters. The packets represented both a physical and emotional attachment. The physical attachment was created because the students now possessed the tools to debate with. Moreover, an emotional attachment to the files was demonstrated because their sense of self as debaters was reinforced, thus causing the shrieks of excitement. The students became all consumed in the process of opening and examining the core files that it made the walls of the classroom disappear and the world of debate appear.

Much must be decided when the students go through the core files. Most importantly, the students determine their speaking positions, which greatly defines their identities as debaters and teammates. The process of selecting the speaker positions ask students to assess their current skills and match them according to which position will most likely fit best. Typically, the fastest reader takes up the first speaker position. This means one is responsible for presenting her case to the judge and must read approximately 8-13 pages of evidence in only 8 minutes. The first speaker, called the 1 AC, must be confident that he can read the entire case. The first speaker also gives the first rebuttal speech, which is a very important role because in only 5 minutes the debater must answer all the arguments the other team has made, refute that evidence, and argue that the affirmative case is the winning side. It is a hefty responsibility, but even more so are the second speaker's responsibilities.

The second speaker must write all of her own speeches, unlike the first speaker who reads a prewritten set of arguments for the first speech. The second speaker has the responsibility of not only furthering his own case, but also responding and refuting every single argument the negative side of the debate brings up. The second speaker is the last speaker to speak for her team so the win rests heavily on this one person. The process of

selecting who will speak first and second when the student's debate on the negative side also occurs.

I observed both Xavier and his partner Juan as well as Joseph and Carlos undergo this process. Xavier and his partner were both brand new debaters so they were somewhat confused about what to do so they decided to see who could read the affirmative case the fastest and that would determine who the first speaker was. They both read it and Juan was slightly faster so he became the first speaker. Juan was uncomfortable having to write his own speeches and Xavier, confident in his analytical abilities, grudgingly agreed to be the second speaker.

Joseph and Carlos had a tougher time because both saw themselves as having the necessary skills to be the first speaker. They were both first speakers in middle school so each thought they should remain the same in high school. After a long discussion, like Xavier and Juan, Carlos and Joseph took turns reading to see who was the fastest. They were both very close so finally after more negotiation, they decided Joseph would be the first speaker on the affirmative side and Carlos would be the first speaker on the negative.

The reason picking speaker positions was important was because it created new opportunities for exploring aspects of their debater identities amongst the responsibilities and skills required by each speaker position. It helped them to transform from a student in a debate class to a debater with core files to argue from and speaker positions from which to do this. When the students identified what speaker position they were, they would say, "I'm the 1AC" or "I'm the 1NC." When they use this type of language the participants are communicating as debaters because each of these positions entails certain meanings and responsibilities. These responsibilities elevate students from just being

student in a debate class to being an official debater.

The physical acceptance of the core files was very much like the students had been interpellated into the identity of debater. Hall's (1996a) definition of identity has two parts, the discourses that interpellate a person as the subject of a particular discourse and the processes that build people into a subject position from which they can speak. These two parts are sutured together. In this instance, one could call out, "Hey debater," and multiple heads would turn accepting that subject position as a place to speak from given the discursive practices that expressed the acceptance of the core files and the choosing of roles within their partnerships. Additionally, the debate class now had a collective identity to identify with because of their interpellation as debaters, the discursive practices of picking their speaking position, and the naming of themselves as that particular position. These commonalities gave students a shared identity.

"Express Yourself!"

Another aspect of the debater identity included student reports that debate gave them the ability to express themselves. Carlos explained, "It feels good to be able to speak up and say what you believe." Another student indicated that debate makes "you feel like you have a voice; when I'm debating I'm not the shy person I normally am." In all of my interviews, the debaters made reference to debate being some form of self-expression. This is important because if we are to assume that the students of John Dewey are ensconced in a deficit-based environment, then these students are rarely given space to form their own opinions and share them because of teacher dominated classrooms and the use of the banking method of instruction (Freire, 1970). Teacher domination kills self-expression in students; hence, students have no outlet. For these

students, debate provides a platform for them to have an opinion and give shape to it through engagement with the evidence and their opponents. After a debate round, I frequently heard statements like, "and I said this and then I used [insert author's last name] research to defend my argument and then I said that we should keep the embargo" and on and on they would go. Especially the novices would all group up together practically yelling at each other about what they did in their round.

The ability to make decisions on how and what to say gave the debaters the opportunity for self-expression. Also, having to deliver those arguments in the form of speeches, where no one can talk during your speech, also contributed to the feeling of students developing a public voice. Several of the participants talked about how when it was their turn to speak they felt powerful because everyone had to listen including the judge. One student mentioned that as a result of giving speeches and being able to express himself, he felt more comfortable speaking up in his other classes.

One might argue that the highly structured nature of policy debate coupled with the fact that the students argue from prewritten argument packets, core files, may inhibit self-expression and encourage mimicry. Part of being the traditional, White high school debater is learning how to research and write cases based on evidence and logical reasoning. Core files, for novice and junior varsity, may impede or delay that part of the learning process until the debater is considered to be at the varsity level. Having sat through almost 100 debates, many of them novice and junior varsity, I can speak to whether the students were debating or imitating each other as well as to how the students expressed their feelings. At first, the debates sound very stilted and rehearsed. The students just read the evidence without understanding it hoping the judge will understand

more than they do and vote for them. There are few conclusions drawn by the students to entice the judge to vote them up because they do not understand what they are reading because of low levels of reading comprehension and a very limited understanding of how a debate works, meaning they know when to speak and some know what to read, but they do not understand strategy. As the debaters move through the season, they come to understand the evidence they are debating with and learn to be strategic, make initial arguments, and draw conclusions. They sound less like they are stumbling to read some words on a page to presenting well rehearsed speeches. The more familiarity they develop, the more they learn how to manipulate the evidence to fit their case. For example, instead of using a piece of evidence in the 2AC, the debaters move it in the 1AC speech. Although minimal, this skill demonstrates that they are learning how to build a case and answer it. The novices particularly and the junior varsity debaters do complain about using the files especially when new evidence is available from the news that they cannot utilize because they must stick to the evidence in the core files. However, half way through the debate season both levels are given new cases and evidence to argue from. The debaters then start the process all over. Varsity debaters are free to write their own cases and change their evidence whenever they wish.

The question still remains, are the debaters merely imitating debating or are they learning new skills? I think they do both. Yes, the students use the same materials and therefore, make the same arguments. This can be considered mimicry. But, I do not see that mimicry is a problem especially in the beginning of the tournament season when the debaters are struggling with reading comprehension and understanding the rigid structure of policy debate. The core files improve the learning curve the student's experience.

Asking novice and junior varsity to write their own cases without access to computers and research databases and an understanding of how to research and put together evidence, in addition to underdeveloped reading and critical thinking skills, is a monumental task that can be an insurmountable given the lack of resources. Without core files, it could seem like the students are being set up to fail and that is a situation CUDL is dedicated to preventing. Core files do offer equity and access to all the debaters.

However, despite my observations, the debater's viewpoints are what are most important to capture. The students in this study all described feelings that they were experiencing and expressing themselves. The debaters I followed developed favorite pieces of evidence and authors to use to make certain arguments they wanted to make. They invented new ways to construct the evidence they received and then they shared that through their speeches. The rebuttal speeches the debaters must give are also a place where the debater can really share their opinions. Moreover, debaters must know both sides of any argument because they have to debate both sides in alternating affirmative and negative rounds at tournaments. These debaters quickly figured out which evidence attacks each other and then tried to use other evidence to make new and different arguments that supported their positions. As a result, there is more adaptability to what the students can do with the core files than one might first think. And, the ability to make new arguments and use the evidence differently demonstrates a certain level of critical thinking from which the debaters draw from that add to their feelings of freedom and development of voice. The practices of self-expression, the ability to give speeches, and wherewithal to learn how to manipulate evidence is a way to explore and experiment with

one's debater identity.

A Winning Legacy

When you enter the debate classroom at John Dewey, immediately noticeable are the multitudes of trophies. From cups, to plaques to gavels and posters detailing their accomplishments, there is evidence of a winning legacy everywhere. It is clear that John Dewey has a history of winning, especially since 2009. With the exception of 1 year, John Dewey has had one team qualify for the national championships each year.

Many of the students expressed their pride in being a part of the John Dewey debate team. For example, Carlos stated,

> I can actually be part of John Dewey now, I'm not just someone who goes [to the school], I'm contributing to the image of John Dewey and also we get to defend John Dewey's honor because we get to say, 'Oh we're on the debate team' and 'We're one of the best debate teams there is.' That's how I see it.

Joseph indicated similar feelings by surmising that being on the debate team meant he was defending his school and that the debate team helped the reputation of the high school. Defending the honor of John Dewey meant winning at tournaments and coming home with trophies.

Carminda felt she was defending the legacy of the team. It was an expectation that as team captains, Carminda and her partner Benicia would also go to the national championships because like the captains that came before them, they were one of the best teams in CUDL. Carminda had been groomed by previous captains and Mrs. Taylor to do nothing less. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Carminda and Benicia won every CUDL tournament except one and qualified for the national championships.

For the novice students like Joseph and Carlos, the winning legacy of John Dewey serves as a source of pride and provides them with a positive identity in which they can

insert themselves because they are now officially a part of the team. But for Carminda and Benicia, upholding the legacy of the team stemmed from a different place because the winning legacy put direct pressure on them to succeed and also as captains, help the rest of the team to win.

Identities are constructed through discourse and the winning of legacy of John Dewey appears to produce two different discourses. One is about pride and the other is about the harshness of losing. For the novices, all they have heard about and experienced has been about John Dewey being one of the most winning teams and how as part of the debate team, they now get to insert themselves into that discourse. For Carminda and Benicia, they spoke of a different discourse—one that was punitive in nature. This second discourse emphasized the humiliating nature of losing and how it was inconsistent with the school's winning legacy.

"Winning At All Costs!"

The John Dewey Debate team existed in an environment where winning was everything. Mrs. Taylor, their teacher and coach, placed a lot of emphasis on winning and was known for saying, "Second place, first loser" and "I want to win not just place." Mrs. Taylor's attitude and the attitudes of the former seniors who taught the class created an environment where losing was unacceptable. In one interview, Carminda talked about how the previous captains looked at losing as solely negative and would berate them if they lost. At tournaments, the captains would call out to them as they left for a debate round, "You better not lose!" Carminda inhabited this way of thinking and after losing their first rounds as freshman debaters, she and her partner stopped losing and started winning. "Losing was not an option," Carminda said although she admitted that of

course they still lost rounds, but for the most part they won and they were considered one of the top teams each year, earning multitudes of awards or "hardware" as she called it.

For the novice debaters winning was important because it was what the team had taught them, but they did not bear the burden of the cost of losing like Carminda and Benicia. In part, because Benicia and Carminda were the team captains that year and chose not to adopt such a harsh view of losing and Mrs. Taylor's views were not re-inscribed by the two young women, the novice and junior varsity debaters were not as tied to the idea of "win at all costs." For the most part, the John Dewey novice and junior varsity teams were always excited to win and disappointed to lose, but losing did not have the same identity impact as it previously had in prior years.

Carminda and Benicia were the exception to the attitudes of the novice and junior varsity debaters because losing might have cost them the ability to qualify for the national championships. Not qualifying would have been devastating to their identities as debaters and even their personal, social identities especially for Carminda. Carminda expressed in an interview midway through the season that the amount of stress she felt to qualify for nationals superseded her schoolwork and applying to colleges. She was all consumed with debate and her definition of success rested solely on qualifying for nationals. Carminda explained that she would feel embarrassed in front of her friends and other debaters if she did not qualify. Carminda's primary identity is tied to her success as a debater at least during the season of debate. A debater identity through Carminda's eyes is all consuming especially after having debated for all 4 years of high school. Qualifying for nationals was the ultimate measure of her success as both a debater and a person.

The presence of a "win at all costs" mentality in this setting, especially considering some of Bowles and Gintis' (1976) critiques of education as indoctrination can be read to assert a decidedly capitalistic position. A "win at all costs" identity invitation can be seen to support extreme competition to the exclusion of other social values like collaboration and creativity. This narrow and mechanistic position appeared, in the data, to be the only identity position offered to Carminda and Benicia. In this way, participation in debate can be read as the two young women are experiencing false consciousness. This also means that competition, from a functionalist viewpoint, is considered natural and a necessary means to production and reproduction.

Examining this "win at all costs" identity as a form of insidious competition invites a different viewpoint of debate; one in which, debate is viewed as more than just an elocutionary practice, but as one that serves the needs of a capitalistic society. However, albeit false consciousness or not, Carminda and Benicia seem to be the only ones caught up in this type of competition.

While labeling Carminda and Benicia as having false consciousness is apt, it also limits any nuanced or contextualized understandings because false consciousness is so finite. Another way to look at the "winning at all costs" mentality is through the lens of a winner identity. A winner identity would offer more nuanced understandings because there are multiple ways to define it, students may demonstrate it differently, and its impacts may diverge from the punitive nature of the winning at all costs mentality. For example, a winner identity could emphasize winning, but also see losing as winning because the goal would be to learn from one's mistakes. An identity like this would make all aspects of debating worthwhile because there would always be something to

learn.

In Reid Brinkley's (2012) analysis of how UDL debaters are scripted by the media because of their race and poverty levels, at the end of her journal article, she suggests that another way to view UDL debates is through a winning and losing script. This could potentially open up a different way to view winning and losing. The next section explores the actions and reactions of participants to winning and losing.

Winning and Losing

Despite John Dewey's culture of win at all costs, part of a debater identity is assessing the impact on the debater depending if one wins or loses. "Did we win? Did we lose? Which one, win or lose? Please tell us we won!" These are some of the thoughts that race through debater's minds as they wait to hear the reading of the ballot from the judge. Did we win or did we lose? Winning and losing are very important to a debater because their record of wins and losses determines how far they can go in a tournament and defines their skill as debaters. At each tournament, there are a certain number of rounds. Win all your rounds and you typically make it to the finals. Win three rounds out of four, maybe you break and get to go to finals, but maybe not. Lose two and win two and your tournament has ended.

For Joseph and Carlos, the entire debate process is about winning and losing even though they could rarely tell if they had won or lost a round. Once a debate was over, Carlos and Joseph would typically look at me and either flip me a thumbs up or thumbs down sign or sometimes they would mouth without speaking, "Did we win?" I usually would shrug my shoulders because often I would not know and typically, I thought they lost. I observed Joseph and Carlos debate a multitude of times and my observations

reflect that I almost always thought they lost unless I witnessed the other team do something that I knew was wrong. I am not sure why I thought they always lost. They won so much more often than they lost. It may have to do with the fact that I only have a novice understanding of debate, and I often would get lost in the ambiguity of the arguments being made or I would identify mistakes made on both sides and not know which mistake was worse and would make the judge vote for or against them. So in order to not get Joseph and Carlos' hopes up too high I would simply shrug my shoulders and smile.

Watching Juan and Xavier debate was always interesting because they had never debated before whereas Joseph and Carlos had debated for CUDL in middle school. In the beginning, Juan and Xavier had a lot of difficulty understanding the other team's arguments and instead of whispering amongst themselves, they would write what they were thinking on Post-Its and slam it on the other's desk. By the end of the debate, their desks would be strewn with brightly colored Post-Its, which Xavier would save. He once let me see some of the Post-Its and they were very funny because most of them used texting jargon or asked questions like "do you understand what they said?" Some of the texting included IDK, IMO, LOL, and WTF. They were also littered with profanity.

As the season progressed, Juan and Xavier used fewer and fewer Post-Its as they became more able to distinguish their opponents' arguments and know how to respond with their own. Xavier, especially, started to develop into a really strong debater because of his analytical skills and the debater persona he developed. Xavier describes this persona when he explains how debate makes him feel awesome and describes how he approaches his speeches. Xavier shares,

> When I'm walking up to the podium, I love that walk. I love to wear shoes that make a lot of noise. I love that part when I've just finished walking up to the podium, [and I'm thinking] watch me go confidently, watch me go act like I know my evidence, seemingly.

Despite his air of confidence and the persona he evokes, Xavier, like Joseph and Carlos, could never really tell when his team won or not. But, unlike Joseph and Carlos, Xavier would engage in a review of the debate to try and see where and why he and his teammate had won or lost.

Carminda and Benicia did not let me watch them debate as much as the novices. They were always hugely nervous and felt like I might make them more nervous. I always respected their wishes, but as the debate season went on, and the level of trust grew between us, I was able to watch them more and more. Watching these two women debate was a nail-biter. As I have said, I only have a novice level knowledge of debate so watching Carminda and Benicia was especially difficult because of all the debater jargon like perm (permutation), link turns, Ks (kritiks), ASPEC, etc. However what I did not understand, I made up for by reading their nonverbals. I could feel their nervous energy, yet I also could feel their confidence as well. Carminda is the more assertive of the two, and it was easy to sense when she was frustrated because of the stance of her body, how she would type on her laptop, and how the whispering with Benicia would increase and grow louder. Carminda was frustrated a lot, but this frustration was masking the level of fear she had of losing. To win a tournament, you virtually cannot lose a round, maybe one loss will still keep you in the competition but sometimes not; therefore the two young women had the pressure of not losing a single round. Although some rounds were easier than others, their fear of losing because of a lay judge or losing on some technicality always kept them amped up.

Each team responded to winning and losing differently. For example, when Joseph and Carlos won, they would smile politely and thank the judge, but once outside of the room they would say "Yes!" and toss their tub around. They would then immediately proceed to the cafeteria to meet up with other John Dewey debaters so they could announce that they won. Winning really energized Joseph and Carlos. On the other hand, Joseph described losing as "devastating." When he heard the reading of the ballot and was told the other team had won, "it was like a punch in the gut." Despite feeling downtrodden, the two young men never expressed high levels of anger or really demonstrated any intense emotions when they lost. They would simply return to the cafeteria, eat some hot Cheetos, drink some Gatorade and wait for the other teams to come back to see how they did.

Xavier and Juan were the same way. When they won, they were excited and could not wait to tell the other teams, mainly Joseph and Carlos, so they would rush to the cafeteria to meet up with the rest of the team. Xavier loved to give all the details about how he knew that they had won and how he had debated. Juan was more quiet and reserved. When they lost, Xavier still maintained a fairly positive attitude. Xavier would typically make everyone laugh by telling everyone what went wrong in the round and his role in it. But, there were times when Xavier was very quiet after a loss and would sit by himself and not engage the rest of the team. He exuded disappointment and sometimes frustration. Like Carlos and Joseph, he would calculate in his head what it meant for his team to lose and how far they could get in tournament with a loss.

Finally, Carminda and Benicia's reactions to winning and losing were very interesting because they always maintained a high level of composure. If they won, they

would say, "We won," and if they lost, they would say, "We lost." They did not give away a lot of emotion either way. Because the stakes of winning and losing were so high and their debate rounds were often so exhausting, Carminda and Benicia kept their feelings to themselves so they would not get their hopes up about winning the tournament. In my field notes, I wrote about how nonchalant they would act about winning and losing. I personally was curious about how composed they were when everyone else was jumping up and down or letting out their frustrations. Benicia and Carminda did not do this, and I do not think it was because they were seniors and more mature. In my notes, I surmised that it was more about handling the pressure of having to win all the time. Despite their serious demeanors, there were cracks in their composure. For example, if they lost, Benicia would typically seek out another team to talk to and not sit with the John Dewey team. Carminda on the other hand, would self-flagellate if they lost. Even though she was part of a team, she would beat herself up over the loss and always assume it was her fault. No amount of convincing and complimenting would appease Carminda. Knowing that Benicia was an extrovert and Carminda an introvert, it was interesting to see how they handled losing differently.

In sum, the debater winning and losing could be read as examples of false consciousness. However, another perspective is to examine the multifaceted and relational nature of the identities the participants displayed. Although the debaters either won or lost and this is a forced binary, how they went about winning and losing, demonstrated multiple strategies for handling the win or loss and how quickly their attitudes would change when the next round began. A new round was always an opportunity to hone their debate skills and potentially win another round. Winning and

losing was also relational because, particularly for the novices, they related to one another through their wins and losses. It was a part of how they bonded together.

The development of a debater identity in the case of Xavier is especially important to examine. Xavier developed a debating persona that displayed confidence and poise. He acted out the persona he had created for himself when he debated. Without debate, Xavier might not have developed as much confidence and poise.

John Dewey's "Bitchy" Reputation

As the years have passed, schools developed different identities within CUDL. Some teams are known for being very serious, some are solely "in it to win it," and others strive to have more fun. Different teams from individual schools gain reputations with other schools usually it was for winning, but sometimes it was for being hyperaggressive or running difficult arguments to debate. John Dewey was considered a strong team because they won so frequently, but Carminda and Benicia were identified as being very good, but "bitchy" by other teams. Carminda and Benicia held the opinion that John Dewey was hated and considered stuck up, which they felt was just jealousy because they won so much. Jacquelina, another member of the team echoed this sentiment when she overheard an opposing team saying, "Yeah, we just got beat by some bitches from Dewey" after a round.

While John Dewey's team is balanced pretty well between young men and young women, the term bitch seemed to follow Carminda and Benicia around and it became an identity they struggled with. As one of the only all female teams and as the only all female team to remain partners for 4 years, Benicia and Carminda were a prolific team in CUDL. Additionally, Benicia's very social, outgoing, and upfront personality also raised

their level of visibility because she was constantly talking to new and different people in sometimes nice ways and in other ways she would make fun of them in what seemed to be a joking way, but really was insulting. Thus, potentially adding to their label as bitches.

Both were considered bitchy for the way they debated. The girls were assertive and sometimes aggressive in their debating, which earned them the label of "bitchy." Being one of the only all-female teams in CUDL and being the type of team that was always "in it to win it," provoked other teams to label them as "bitchy." As reported earlier, many female debaters are caught in a double bind because if they debated passively they would not win and they were not considered good debaters, but if they were assertive and passionate then they were labeled as "bitchy" (Worthen & Pack, 1993). Also, John Dewey was known to be more privileged than other schools and by always dressing up nicely for tournaments, the girls portrayed a middle-class image that did not really fit in with the image of CUDL and the majority of its teams. Their appearance and behavior during rounds created a different environment of debate, one that other teams may have conceived as acting above or superior to other schools.

Most of the time being called a bitch hurt Carminda and her partner because through their eyes they did not see themselves as debating any differently than the other top teams in CUDL. They were not really self-aware of the image they projected and therefore, could not see why other schools might consider them bitchy. Carminda reasoned that they were called bitchy because they debated similarly to the male debaters in CUDL and the male debaters did not like that. Debate is a male dominated event and can be potentially hostile to women (Women's Debate Institute, 2001). In fact, Carminda

and I discussed how one school in particular was hostile to them and used passive aggressive debating tactics to annoy them and try to make them lose. When they would respond to these tactics and call the team out for their behaviors is when they felt they were labeled as bitchy. A round between Magnet Prep and Carminda and Benicia illustrates this point.

Magnet Prep's reputation was that they were always in it to win at all costs. Although the round was supposed to start, the other team, both males, huddled outside with their other teammates talking strategy, which can be considered inappropriate and rude, especially when they talked past the time the debate was supposed to start. The other team finally entered the room, but immediately one of them said he needed to use the bathroom, which again delayed the debate. The judge could have intervened, but chose not to. Carminda and Benicia had already set up their computers and were prepared to debate. Carminda asked the opponent in the room what he would be running. He vaguely answered. His vague answer infuriated Carminda because the norm in CUDL is that before a debate begins you disclose what case you will be running. Carminda and Benicia had already debated another team from Magnet Prep, who they described as debating dirty because they would kick out arguments at the last minute wasting their debate and preparation time and making for an unfair debate round. In my field notes, I have written that Carminda addressed the other debater and said, "Can we not do this? Can we have a debate without your passive aggressiveness? Can we just have a fair debate and walk out of here as fellow debaters?" Carminda thought that addressing the problem before the round would perhaps set up a less personally contentious and fairer debate. In this instance, Carminda was attempting to negotiate an

identity of level-headedness and fairness. She wanted to establish a fair debate where both sides had equal ground to debate from. But in the end, Magnet Prep still dismissed Carminda and Benicia as bitchy, female debaters.

While being called bitchy was typically a negative label for Carminda and Benicia, sometimes they would laugh about how they were called bitchy and use it to their advantage. Carminda and Benicia made fun of being called bitchy by teasing each other about how bitchy the other one was. They would say something snarky about another team and then say #bitchy (read hash tag bitchy) and laugh. The young women exercised the label of bitch to their advantage when they used it as an intimidating factor in a round. Depending upon the team, sometimes Carminda and her partner could be considered bitchy about sharing evidence or when cross examining their opponents.

Not all of John Dewey's team felt that Carminda and Benicia's reputation for being bitchy was accurate or that other teams disliked John Dewey. For example, Xavier held a different opinion; he felt that Dewey was not as hated as Carminda and Benicia expressed. He stated,

> I don't think we're like, I mean because Carminda and Benicia say we're hated because we win and stuff, but I'm not entirely sure it's that. I just think people acknowledge that we're good. You know how we ask if Magnet Prep is good, they say, 'Yeah.' I think they say, 'Yeah they are good' about us too.

Xavier's opinion reflects what he has seen and felt from other teams. Because he feels like he can say other teams are good, Xavier thinks others say the same about John Dewey. He has also interacted with other teams and is using his own experiences to formulate an opinion that contradicts Benicia and Carminda's claim of identity. However, Benicia and Carminda did not really offer the Dewey debaters any other identity. It was always, "We're hated because we're good and win a lot." And also,

"Other teams hate us and think we're bitchy." In my observations, I found myself trying to understand how Benicia and Carminda were exploring and living out the identity of being bitchy as well as understanding the needs of the other debaters to not be defined by this label.

The label of bitchy affected John Dewey's debate team based on their level of experience. For example, novice debaters, who are starting out fresh do not want to be saddled with the label of bitchy because in their eyes they have done nothing to provoke this labeling. Novice debaters experience a different world than varsity debaters. Winning for novice debaters is exciting and new. There is not much clash in novice debates because they read core files instead of being responsible for writing their own cases. There is not a lot of emotion tied to novice debating; therefore, it is easy to see how Xavier disagreed with Benicia and Carminda.

At the varsity level, teams write their own cases and research their own evidence. They become personally attached to their cases making debate rounds more emotionally and sometimes physically charged. Carminda and Benicia were especially attached to their case because it was developed at debate camp at a highly reputable and recognizable university that they received a full scholarship from. The emotionally charged culture of debate leads to a lot of hostility between debaters, especially between male and females. Last year, at the national competition for urban debate leagues, one male debater told a female debater to "sit your White ass down, bitch!" It is commonplace for female debaters to be called bitchy because debate is considered a man's world and while their level of aggressiveness is acceptable, behaviors by females that mirror the males' are not.

There are multiple constructions for how the term bitchy was utilized and taken

up by the young women and the John Dewey team. First, being called "bitchy" is an offensive speech act as defined by Davidson (1996) and is designed to discipline Benicia and Carminda for stepping outside of the status quo of debate. Although not an uncommon label for female debaters, this speech act was meant to bring the young women to heel. It had everything to do with structures of masculinity and "appropriate" structures of femininity, which other teams did not think they followed. Benicia and Carminda were not appropriately feminine enough so they were disciplined.

Second, while being called a bitch is part of disciplinary technologies and speech acts, Carminda and Benicia demonstrate how one can be constitutively shaped and shape their reality. The influence of being labeled a bitch shaped the two young women into bitches so that became a part of their public persona. Carminda and Benicia did not change the way they debated, but they changed their attitudes albeit consciously or unconsciously. For example, the way the two young women teased each other using the phrase #bitchy showed how they were shaped by the label and then used the label to shape their reality. If they were going to be labeled as bitches why not act like bitches and joke about it.

However, third, Hall (1991) writes about how one can never know his identity because of the unconscious and therefore, I believe some of the girls' actions that were labeled bitchy were unconsciously acted out by them. Unfortunately, these actions were visible to others. Both Carminda and Benicia are beautiful and considered very attractive by others. They always come to tournaments dressed up, with their Mac laptops, and name brand personal items, which as mentioned do not really fit in with the overall CUDL image. While the two knew many people on different teams, they only associated

with certain schools and certain people a lot of the time. Their behaviors could have been perceived as acting like they looked down on others because of who they chose to associate with. Benicia and Carminda were very much like the popular girls everyone loved to hate. And while they unconsciously acted out an identity that people labeled as bitchy, they at times did so unknowingly.

I should note that as a feminist, the term bitch and calling someone a bitch or describing one as bitchy is always highly offensive especially when these terms are used in a male-dominated, masculine setting. It was difficult for me to demonstrate how Benicia and Carminda were discursively constructed as bitchy and how they played into patriarchal structures when they tried to joke about their bitchy identities and teased each other for being bitchy. Other debaters like Xavier tried to shift this language so that their team was acknowledged as being a good team and not that the whole team was bitchy. His construction was that others thought of the John Dewey team as very good debaters. He discursively constructed an identity of mutual appreciation for each team's talent, in place of Benicia and Carminda's constructions.

Summary of Debater Identity

In summation of the debater identity, we see how identities are explored within the specific context of a particular debate team. A different team might produce a different analysis; however, this study focuses solely on John Dewey High School and the voices of its participants. This analysis reveals how students accept the label of debater and commit to their identities as debaters.

Moreover a very important aspect of identity making was the freedom the students experienced in expressing themselves and not being afraid to do so. Individual

expression is an important part of one's identity because it contingently identifies who we are and what we believe. The fact that the participants developed this sense of voice in spite of using precut evidence speaks to the powerful feelings one draws from the ability to speak publicly and be heard.

Finally, identifying as John Dewey debaters brought with it a host of identity markers such as being ensconced in a winning legacy where winning was built up to be everything. It is interesting that the novice debaters seemed largely unaffected by this identity. Of course, none of them wanted to lose and were always excited to win, but they seemed to escape the stigma of losing unlike Carminda. While Carminda understood losing and its value, she was affected by a) the winning legacy that she was a part of and that had come before her, b) the influence of previous John Dewey team captains, and c) her own sense of responsibility to win and go to the national debate championships. This analysis confirms that multiple factors influence a debater identity and it is the accumulation of all these factors that compose a distinct set of debater identities.

Academic Identity

As the debater identity of the students took shape, examples of experimenting with academic identity began to peek through. The longer the students debated, and I remained in the field, the clearer it became that a debater identity feeds into or assists in the exploring of an academic identity for the students. The following four elements emerged from the data analysis and appear to make up the students' academic identity. Those elements include usefulness of debate, the influence of grades and college, school involvement, and the definition of an academic identity.

This Stuff Is Useful!

Several John Dewey debaters expressed that debate expanded what they knew and where they could apply their debate knowledge. The students illuminate the transferability, applicability and adaptability of debate knowledge to their academic worlds. For instance, Joseph stated:

> I think the thing I like the most about being in debate especially this year is because I am in world geography and so learning about Cuba and Mexico and what their status is and everything really helped me because we were actually studying it and so I knew everything that was going on. It [Debate] helps me keep up with current events more and that way I have more new arguments in case something comes up.

Xavier indicated that the skills he learns help him in other subjects or the adaptability of knowledge. For example, Xavier explains,

> It's really helped me in English like I had to write an essay and I was like—the essay was what important issues should be considered when discussing space travel –and like I was thinking impact calculus in my head. And on my essay, I got almost a 100. It was an AP essay so I got like a high 8 or a low 9 and my argument was it will cause global disaster and its expiration will crumble diplomacy and cause psychological trauma.

Xavier's claim that debate helps him in his other classes is well justified. Xavier possesses awareness about his academic abilities and how debate has influenced them. Xavier's identity had changed over time so that he can meta-cognitively assess his skills, which made him feel more confident.

One of the most interesting comments about the applicability of debate comes from Carlos who, like Joseph, talked about how he used his knowledge from last year's topic in his engineering class this year. But Carlos's descriptions also demonstrate an adaptability of how debate informs his academic identity when he explains,

> My favorite career class would have to be my engineering class because there we actually draw and learn to be freethinking engineers; I learn to think outside the box. Like don't just think in 2D think in 3D to imagine the things.

Carlos also went on to say that "I learned things about the world; before debate I was just in the world, but I didn't know what was going on. Now because you actually do research you are contributing to the world." Carlos' thoughts illuminate how applying debate skills helps you in classes, but also can be adapted to provide one with a worldly sense of view—that of a full participant in life. Debate broadens the range of academic identities through the transferability, applicability and adaptability of debate knowledge and experiences.

Academic identities are constructed through affiliations with schooling practices (Nasir & Saxe, 2003). Carlos and Xavier illustrate how debate knowledge improves their school knowledge, thus building an "affiliation" with both debate and school. If an extra-curricular activity can build applicable school knowledge, then it is a worthy educational practice.

The As, Bs, and Maybe a C

All the participants indicated that their academic identity consisted of earning good grades or being ranked highly in their classes. All students at John Dewey who participate in extracurricular activities had to be passing every class with a 70%. However, participating in CUDL appeared to accelerate the desire to earn good grades, often because the participants saw getting good grades as the gateway to a better future—college. None of the participants had parents who had graduated from college and seeing as well as experiencing the struggles this caused for their families made them extra motivated.

In a joint interview with Carlos and Joseph both expressed a strong desire to earn good grades and get a college education. However, this interview took place just after

first semester grades came out and neither of the two young men had done as well as they wanted to. They explained that even though they took Pre-AP classes in middle school, these had not prepared them for the rigor of high school classes. Both Joseph and Carlos were disappointed, but Joseph said, "It was just an adjustment phase and now I better understand what is expected of me." Carlos agreed.

In separate interviews, I learned more about their drive to get a college education. For Joseph there seemed to be an accelerated sense of urgency to get good grades so that he could get into the college of his choice and get a good job. He states,

> I've found it [debate] actually helps you in life because you do good in school the more colleges will notice you because you are being a good kid that has good grades. [This] will help me get a scholarship to wherever I need to go so it will pay for college and everything and it will hopefully get me a job that I actually like and do stuff that I like.

Joseph's urgency was fueled by his family circumstances. His father has been unemployed since Joseph was in middle school. This was very difficult on the family, especially for Joseph and his two younger siblings. Joseph's mom found work through the city's transit system and Joseph described it as a good job. "My mom likes it and everyone seems to like her," he said.

Carlos demonstrated a similar type of urgency when he spoke about going to college. Carlos explained,

> Yes, [school is important] because my parents have it drilled in to me that if you don't have school, there's not much you can do in life because I mean if you don't go to school what are you going to do? You can't expect a job to land from the sky; you have to work hard to get what you want.

Whereas Joseph's drive to get an education came from the result of his parent's situation, Carlos' came from his parent's coaching.

Xavier comes from a more stable background than some of the other participants.

While Xavier is not rich, he did not appear to struggle as much as the other students. Xavier is interesting because he is highly intelligent, but his grades do not necessarily reflect his capabilities. Xavier is still ranked in the top 18% of his class, but his GPA was below a 3.0 and he planned on going to college. This was a little surprising because a) it's difficult to imagine someone with lower than a 3.0 could be in the top 18% of his class and b) usually it is difficult to get into college with lower than a 3.0 cumulative GPA. Xavier acknowledged that he would have to get his grades up his senior year. Still Xavier had high aspirations; he planned on applying to New York University (NYU) for creative writing and psychology. There seemed to be little question as to if Xavier would go to college rather than where.

Carminda was the most focused on her grades and had been for both her junior and senior year because she wanted to go to college. Carminda described herself as,

> I'm honestly a huge nerd. I seriously study a lot especially if it's something that is important to me, I know that's not always a good thing but if it's important to me I will put my 100% in but uh overall I do try my best. I'm a diligent student and I want to get the A and I push myself. It's really weird to hear myself say that because I wasn't always like that at the beginning of high school I wasn't as motivated as I wish I was because I was going through so much, but as the years continued I started to get in gear and I was like freaking out and was like trying to always get that extra point and I was studying and tests were always a big deal so I would say I'm a really hardworking student.

When Carminda says she is a hardworking student, she means it. Of all the participants, Carminda was the most concerned with her grades. Carminda would pull all-nighters just to study for a test or finish a complex assignment. She took all AP classes. On top of her schoolwork, she also spent countless hours prepping for debate, which usually correlated with a lack of sleep. However, Carminda's hard work paid off as she ended up being ranked 32 out of 475 students and was in the top 10% of her graduating class. This put her in an excellent position to choose a college to attend.

All of the participants strove to earn As and Bs and sometimes settled for the occasional C. However their intensity to earn good grades established a unique academic identity because as Joseph intimated, debate opened the world of knowledge and college and this made them want to strive more to earn good grades to solidify their future. The students saw debate as the vehicle that could help them realize their goal of attending college and establishing a strong academic identity, that is, performing in ways that earned them good grades helped achieve this goal.

The participants constructed debate as a form of social mobility. Debate was a way to surpass the experiences of their parents and attend college, which they established as a means to having a successful future. A Bachelor's degree rather than a high school diploma does give students cultural capital, access to better paying jobs, and the ability to make more money. However, social mobility is not that simple especially amongst theories of production and reproduction. There is still the notion that students are part of the working class and will reproduce similar outcomes as their families. Bowles and Gintis (1976) theorize that schools are still ingrained in meritocracy and reward on the basis of social background. This would mean that all the As and Bs the participants strive for may not allow them any social mobility that they are whole-heartedly striving for.

On the other hand, debate may be the vehicle that spurs students to transcend disciplinary practices like the barriers to information that Davidson (1996) speaks of because of the confidence they have in asking for the information they need and the attention they most likely garner from school counselors based on their grades. For example, Carminda drew little attention from her school counselor during her freshman

and sophomore years, but as a junior and senior, because of her class rank and grades, she received information about the ACT and SAT, college scholarships, and the college application process. While her counselor in no way provided her with all the help she needed, Carminda at least was recognized and provided with enough general information to get her started on her path to a university. Carminda's academic identity afforded her the ability to break through typical disciplinary technologies and practices that normally someone with her racial and social background would not be able to.

Let's Get Involved!

Debating fueled students to extend their interests outside of debate to academic activities that help develop their sense of academic identities. The development of academic identities is driven by the creation of bonds the students make with schooling. These participants were very involved outside of debate. Carlos was involved with an on campus Christian group; Joseph was involved in band and the Christian group; Xavier was a member of the newspaper and writing club; and Carminda was on the Executive Board as the Philanthropist. Being a junior and senior, respectively, Xavier and Carminda had already joined the clubs for that school year, but Carlos and Joseph joined their clubs after joining debate. What was interesting was that the more the students debated the more confident they grew, which led two of the students to run for elected positions. As both students were Hispanic, this was very rare because even though Hispanics make up the highest population of any ethnic group at the school, John Dewey is still dominated by Whites.

Xavier was one of the students who ran for office on the Executive Board. In his portrait, I detail how Xavier campaigned for his position. He appealed to the Hispanic

students and made the argument that they were not represented on the Executive Board and by electing him he would be their representation. Xavier's efforts made many more Hispanic students vote according to the vote tally. This was very important to Xavier's sense of academic identity because not only was his academic identity defined by his participation in school events and clubs, but also by the importance of race and racial equality in a self-reported segregated school. In case of all of the participants, debate spurred them to increase their affiliations with practices of schooling, thus, building a strong sense of academic identity.

What's an Academic Identity?

The transfer of knowledge and the use of debate skills is one of the first inclinations of students developing an academic identity as a result of their debating. Following a study by Nasir (2012), where the author directly asked high school students what they thought an academic identity was, I did the same for my participants. All were very hesitant to answer. I explained there was no right or wrong answer and that seemed to help. Carlos associated academic identity with "what you know and how much you know." Joseph defined academic identity as "how I approach my school work or what I do in school." Both Carlos and Joseph associated academic identity with grades. When asked whether debate influenced his academic identity, Joseph stated, "It's definitely improved it because it's given me more thoughts, things to think about before I do something, maybe I need to think about another way before I finalize everything." This response reveals that the influence of debate opens up and expands the decision making process because debate requires one to know and consider multiple perspectives before finalizing a decision. Joseph's answer indicates his academic identity has changed as the

result of debate because it has increased his abilities to consider additional alternatives before making a plan. Considering multiple viewpoints is a valuable skill debaters learn that is not typical of nondebaters.

Xavier, a junior, initially tied academic identity to how well a person did in school and his or her level of intelligence. He stated, "I'm ranked in the top 18%, I'm 95 out of 523; I think I'm intelligent, I think I'm smart, people acknowledge that I'm smart." Later he explains that he has a high level of intelligence because he has really strong intuition, which has been confirmed by taking numerous tests. He explains that his intuition places him at the same level as really smart people. Xavier therefore associated academic identity with student performance in school, but also with being recognized as intelligent. This is similar to Carlos and Joseph's initial conceptions of academic identity.

Carminda expressed that an academic identity is how you see the value of academics and how you demonstrate those values. Carminda explained,

> My academic identity is someone who sees a huge value in it. I mean because of schooling and because of my education, it's the only reason I'm able to get away from certain things and like it's my escape route now that I'm going off to college like if I didn't care so much about my academics, I would probably still be stuck at home, probably just working a part-time or full-time job just getting by day by day. Like my academic identity is really entwined with my success because those two go hand in hand, they always tell you that the education is the key to success and I live by that. The more you educate yourself and the more you know about the world is not only like getting a good grade on a test or getting a good grade in a class, it's also being able to open a book up and read about the world. I feel like so many people entwine just you and school but I don't think it's always like that. I think it's opening up your perspectives and being able to see different things.

Carminda directly places herself in her academic identity because she explains what her life would be like if it were not for her academics. She imbricates knowledge and school with her success in school and being able to go away to college. Additionally, she explains that knowledge is more than just a good grade, but it is something to be used to

open up the world. Carminda's academic identity is more than just school and success but about learning about the world.

Academic identity is hard to define especially when you are a high school student embroiled in school and learning. I also think it is probably hard for most adults to describe their "academic identity" so I commend these participants for their thoughts. All of the students linked their academic identity to school, which makes the most sense. But in each of their answers there are hidden kernels of thought that relate to debate. For example, Joseph considers multiple sides before he makes a decision; without participating in debate that probably would not be a skill he would have so easily used. Another similar instance is Carminda's thoughts about opening up your perspectives to see the world in multiple ways. Again, this is not a skill that is typically learned in high school. From my experiences with high school students and as a high school teacher, students are typically taught one way to think about something like there is one way to solve a math problem or there is one way to view history. Neither Joseph nor Carminda accepts this to be true and that is something that participating in a UDL program teaches you.

Summary of Academic Identity

Students' academic identities were revealed as the debater identity began to take shape. The first aspect of an academic identity was how the students utilized debate skills and knowledge in school. Debaters transferred, applied and adapted their knowledge to succeed academically. The second aspect of what the participants defined as part of their academic identities was doing well in school. Participation in debate seemed to drive students to earn good grades and fuel their desire to attend college.

These are performances of an academic identity. Furthermore, the participant's involvement in school activities increased, and became more individualized; the students individuated from the team in the activities that they elected to become involved in. Finally, the participants were asked to define academic identity so that their conceptualizations could be understood.

CUDL Identity

Like the concept of academic identity, a CUDL identity revealed itself as the debate season progressed. The typical CUDL debater spends at least 100 hours at CUDL tournaments in an average season; therefore, it is expected that CUDL would influence the debaters in some way. In order to articulate a CUDL identity, during my interviews, I asked a variety of questions to get participants talking about CUDL. In the end, the students identified CUDL as a platform that allowed them to debate and categorized the different types of debaters that participated in CUDL.

A Predictable Platform

In my interviews, I opened with a simple question asking what students thought of CUDL. Most students thought highly of CUDL because it provided them the opportunity to debate. "It's what gives us a forum and place to debate," said Carminda. CUDL's mission is to give every CSD student the opportunity to participate in rigorous academic policy debate because every student deserves the chance to become an articulate and informed leader in his or her school and community.

While Carminda was very direct about what CUDL provides, some of the other debaters described the platform of CUDL in different ways. For instance, both Joseph and Carlos described how organized CUDL was because, "Everyone knew where they

were supposed to be and everything is prepared for you." This may seem like a vague description, but what Carlos and Joseph were alluding to were the core files the novice and junior varsity used to debate from, the printed room assignments for each round of debate, the free food provided, and all the awards given at the awards ceremony. This made CUDL predictable and understandable for Joseph and Carlos. This was important to them and a host of other students because predictability gave students a sense of safety. Many CUDL students experience high levels of uncertainty because of the unpredictably in their home lives; therefore, predictability can be comforting.

There are very few variations to the CUDL tournament schedules so for a lot of students new to debate this is reassuring. As a longtime observer of CUDL, I know that the tournament organizers strive for repetition and consistency to support the students. Examples of repetition and consistency include obtaining one building for tournaments so that the same one is used every time; maintaining identical tournament schedules, feeding students breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks consistently so that they are well fed; having newer students who have debated 2 years or less utilize the same evidence packets so there are no disparities between which schools could conduct research and those who did not have the resources; and handing out as many trophies and medals as possible to the students to reinforce recognition of students' hard work and achievements. These examples of repetition and consistency reveal the understanding CUDL has of both the physical needs of the majority of students they serve and the need for equality. Moreover, the repetition and consistency allows students to develop their debater identities because they do not have to worry about anything but debating.

The participants' desire for repetition and consistency is not necessarily a positive

need to have. The need for predictability can be considered part of the hidden curriculum. Giroux (1983) explains that the hidden curriculum is about the underlying rules and structures that create a routinization of schooling, which students acclimate to and accept as a school and social norm. When there is no routinization, students experience feelings of dissonance, which is why CUDL keeps the schedule and structure of tournaments the same because they understand the students have been conditioned to expect it.

I did ask several of the participants if there was anything that they did not like about CUDL. I asked this question to see how anything perceived as negative would define a CUDL identity as well. I got several complaints about the food that it was always the same thing and Jaquelina surmised that CUDL should serve Mexican food since the majority of the population of debaters is Hispanic. It was funny to hear this complaint because this is not the attitude they display at tournaments. The students are always complimentary and happy with what food is provided, especially when they find the cookie in their Chik-Fil-A or Jason's Deli lunch boxes.

There was one other complaint about CUDL, which was highlighted by Joseph and Carlos, but was also a frustration for other students. There is a running joke that CUDL runs on CUDL time, meaning although CUDL publishes a schedule, they inevitably run behind. Carlos remarked, "They are always running behind, but they never tell you!" Although they act like it is a joke, my observations of Carlos and Joseph describe a level of anxiety and annoyance when the tournament does not run on time. Part of this is their excitement to debate, but it also became a source of anxiety when CUDL did not stick to the times they posted because of the lack of predictability of when

the next debate round would start. Joseph and Carlos worried what if CUDL ran out of time and the debaters could not debate all of their rounds? This would be highly disappointing. Of course, this never happened. But Joseph and Carlos are not the only debaters to feel annoyed when CUDL ran behind; the coaches and support staff also demonstrated frustration. However, there were many other debaters who enjoyed the extra time because they could prep more or socialize with different schools.

Carlos and Joseph's joke about "CUDL Time" was originally rooted in apprehension, but after approximately two tournaments, the two young men became used to the delays and made the lapses in time into a joke. I do not think the complaints the students had really affected the image they held of CUDL. Most felt so lucky to debate and were thankful for the platform CUDL provided that the small gripes they may have held were easily forgotten once the next debate round started. The students' excitement to debate overshadowed everything.

Different Types of Debaters

While CUDL's identity, from the students' perspectives, was that it was an organization that allowed them to debate and fed them and provided supplies, there were different identities offered. The debaters were asked to describe the participants in CUDL because the identification of its constituents would help depict CUDL's identity.

Several of the participants were very descriptive about their fellow debaters. Jaquelina said debaters were social people and then she listed different typologies of debaters such as:

> Loud debaters who like to talk a lot outside the round; cocky debaters who think they are the best, but typically are not liked by the judges; the shy debater who is very quiet and looks scared; and then there's the really nice people who talk to you before and after rounds.

Xavier offered similar classifications when he explained.

> First, there is the socially awkward one that is smart, but doesn't know how to present the argument to the judge. And there's the mediocre debater who is decent, but not that good. There are the ones who are social and know the information like Carminda, Benicia, and Jaquelina—they know their information and stuff. Then there are the really nice people that you feel bad about beating. There are also the people who are really good and you feel really good when you beat them.

Both Jaquelina and Xavier said that it was difficult to categorize CUDL debaters because people are so different and there are many different types of debaters. Also, they both felt that the diversity amongst the CUDL debaters was "awesome" because there was a place for everyone to fit in. Jaquelina and Xavier's categorizations served as a way to break down CUDL debaters into different groups, but were also designed to highlight the diversity of CUDL because there were so many different types of debaters in one organization.

Carminda's response was to start to categorize debaters just like Xavier and Jaquelina. She stated, "The typical CUDL debater will most likely have a sweater or CUDL t-shirt on and umm…wait, I don't think there is a typical one because we are all so different." I asked how the CUDL teams were different and Carminda responded:

> Because we have some teams that are super, super, super in it to win it; they don't care about anything else. But then you have the teams that are like 'well, we're just here to have fun.' Then you have the debaters that are really friendly no matter how competitive they are and they will talk to you about anything and everything. And they're like give me your number and let's hang out. Then you have the debaters that are kind of shy and they're just so trying to get out of their shell and they're usually the freshmen. . .. I don't think there is a typical CUDL debater because we're all so different, but so alike.

Although Carminda starts to categorize CUDL debaters based on dress, Carminda takes a step back and describes types of teams as well as individual types of debaters. Carminda iterates that their differences make them alike.

Because she said CUDL debaters were also alike, I also asked Carminda about the image of CUDL debaters and why the CUDL debaters appeared to be so close instead of steadfast rivalries like I had witnessed at non-CUDL tournaments. First Carminda expressed,

> The image of CUDL debaters is a good one I would have to say; it's kids that not only deserve it because I feel like that word can be slapped around so much, these are kids that earn it, these are kids that work really hard, these are kids that being a part of it we're all such a group that no matter what we did the best we could in that situation even if it was in the round, even if we didn't think something was fair, even if something happened at the tournament personally or like in the debate. I think we are a bunch of kids that really work hard.

As for why the CUDL debaters appeared to be so close-knit, Carminda responded,

> I think its because we come from the same district and I know this sounds kind of cheesy but it's the truth. It's like obvious we've all had to deal with things because how the school is; schooling isn't the easiest so you hear so many funny stories from like different schools. I think it's one of the main reasons that we are so close because we all deal with the same types of things and we're all so used to it.

Like Jacquelina and Xavier, Carminda offers her own set of categorizations of CUDL debaters and describes the diverseness of CUDL teams and debaters, which she also describes as being positive. However, Carminda sees similarity in the diversity of debaters. First, she identifies similarity in the way CUDL debaters earn the right to debate because they work so hard for it. Second, she describes an underlying understanding between CSD students that their schools are not great and that their schooling is difficult. She explains that this gives the debaters at CUDL something to bond over.

The categorizing of debaters allows students to see CUDL debaters as being diverse, whether by team or individual, there are many different types of both. Ordinarily, the presence of such diversity would set up a dialectic of diversity versus

similarity. The students would not be similar because of their diversity. However, Carminda's descriptions of how their collective experiences being students in CSD create a bond between them that challenges the dialectic. Identification of CUDL's debaters influences CUDL's identity because it allows the students to be both different and similar in an accepting and safe environment. Some teams in CUDL are only out to win and others are out to have fun. Some debaters are loud and cocky, while others are quiet and shy. But they all have a similar understanding of the dynamics of being students in the Carlinville School District. What is important about this is that all of these identities are allowed to co-exist within one organization because CUDL does not foster one single identity of a debater.

The categories that emerged from the participant's interviews and portraitures demonstrate how identity is explored in a wide range of contexts such as being a debater, exploring an academic identity, and describing how a CUDL identity shapes debaters' identities. Depending upon the context, the participants were able to experiment with many different identities offered by the UDL. This experimentation with different identities is very important because the participants were able to explore and engage with different aspects of the activity as well as situate themselves within the multitude of identities offered. Because of the nature of debate, the participants were interpellated into the identities of debate, but once hailed they worked to take up those identities that fit best.

Summary of CUDL Identity

From a predictable platform to the categorization of other debaters, the CUDL identity as described by the students contributed to their identities as debaters. The

consistency and routinization of CUDL helped students feel more comfortable because they always knew what was coming next. The participants' descriptions of other debaters was interesting because it brought out the level of diversity in the types of debaters in CUDL. Additionally, Carminda also described how while there was diversity amongst debaters and schools, the CUDL debaters shared commonalities because they all come from the same school district and that makes them bond and become close to one another.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have explored student descriptions of a debater, academic and CUDL identity. The participants' descriptions of their experiences were richly described and theorized. Many aspects of identity emerged and the discursive constructions of them. In sum, participation in a UDL did offer many identities for the participants to explore. However, what makes these constructions of identities interesting is that they were theorized based on student experiences and discourses not from adult perspectives.

Chapter 10 continues to describe the identities of the participants; however, it examines the tensions the students experienced as a result of the multiple identities that they explored through their participation in a UDL. While this chapter offered explanations of what identities students engaged in those identities sometimes caused tensions to occur because some of the new identities rubbed up against other identities the students possessed. This second analysis chapter is an exploration of the conflicting tensions the debaters experienced.

CHAPTER 10

#URBAN: DEBATE IN A RACIAL AND CLASS-CODED SCHOOL

The previous chapter investigated the possible identities students explored through their participation in debate. From the analysis emerged three major identities, a debater, an academic, and a CUDL identity. These identities provided a host of ways students engaged with the UDL program. In this second analysis chapter, the question being asked is, "What tensions exist around the identities experienced through participation in an Urban Debate League and social identities available in the broader culture of the school?" Based on my observations and interviews, the identities that the students explored sometimes created tensions for the participants especially in relation to the social identities of class and, to a lesser degree, race. But first the theoretical context, empirical importance and a description of the data set are necessary to discuss.

This second research question is situated in the theories delineated in Chapter 9 such as identity that has been theorized as fluid, multifaceted and relational. However in this chapter, we explore how some of the new identities students experienced debating for CUDL rubb up against other identities the students held such as their social identities like race and class. Nasir (2012) examines the complexity of identity as it plays out both in and out of school settings and how these settings offer different identities to the participants. Nasir argues it is difficult to integrate multiple identities especially when

they appear to conflict with each other. Therefore, this chapter explores class and racial identities in concert with the identities described in Chapter 9.

The empirical importance of this second question lies in how this second research question pushes the findings of the first analysis into a more critical space. If we stopped at just describing the identities offered, we would only know how those identities functioned in isolation. We all have multiple identities and sometimes they conflict with one another. Introducing potentially new identities is important, but we also must be aware of how new identities are integrated with previously held ones. Integration of our social identities is particularly important to discuss because we know from previous research that school practices greatly affect student's social identities (Davidson, 1996). People are often perceived to be defined by class and race and it is important to know if the identities offered by a UDL program influence students' previously held collective identities.

Again, portraitures were used as the primary data for analysis along with field notes and interview transcriptions. The only difference in this chapter is that the descriptions of the participants are more localized, meaning that instead of describing broad expressions of identity, this chapter hones in on those practices and experiences that specifically affect John Dewey debaters and how some of those practices and experiences exist in tension with one another.

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into five parts. First is an exploration of tensions the John Dewey debaters experienced as a result of conflicts between team norms and violations of them. These conflicts reveal underlying class tensions between the debaters. Second,

there are tensions between John Dewey as CUDL debaters and suburban/private school debaters. Class was a major issue, but race was not. Third, the John Dewey team was divided by race and class, which reflected larger patterns of school segregation. Fourth, one participant demonstrated how he used his academic identity and race to become more active in extracurricular activities. And finally, in the last section, another one of the participants describes what it is like to be labeled an *urban* debater.

Rocking the John Dewey Boat

Fine (2001) determined in his research that debate teams build group norms and cultures together. John Dewey has been a debate team since the inception of CUDL in 2007. As such, they have developed many group norms whether spoken or unspoken. Some of these norms were explored in Chapter 9 including winning at all costs, the John Dewey legacy, categorizations of other debaters, and so forth. My field notes and the transcripts of my interviews show that there were several incidents where, particularly the newer, novice debaters rejected the team norms (unknowingly) and "rocked the John Dewey Boat." Some of these norms that the team experienced revealed tensions over proper debater materials, dress and appearance of debaters, and debate preparation. The base of these conflicts is mainly rooted in clashes between the participants' debater identities and social class.

First, tensions arose over the new debaters' choices to organize and store their core files. The ultimate way to store evidence was through the use of computers eliminating all need for paper files. Very few teams in CUDL had access to laptops or the means to purchase their own. Benicia and Carminda were the exception to this rule; both had purchased brand new MacBook Airs after they attended a debate camp where

the other debaters all had Apple laptops or cutting edge PCs. Because of both Benicia and Carminda's backgrounds, I have no idea how they afforded these new computers, but they did and so they used several strategies they learned at camp to debate without paper. Several other John Dewey debaters had laptops, but typically only one person on the team had one or they did not know how to debate without using paper so they typically stuck to paper files. None of the novice debaters used laptops and few of the junior varsity did. If a debater did not have a laptop, then the norm was to purchase a plastic bin or tub that was designed to hold file folders. The team's core files would then be organized in a specific way within the file folders. To maintain a tub, you needed both hanging file folders and manila file folders, which can be very expensive, but CUDL provides these supplies (except the tub). I remember when Benicia and Carminda had a pink plastic tub that they rolled around on a dolly. Benicia would decorate it for different tournaments and holidays.

Tensions arose when Carlos and Joseph, who had never used a tub to store their files and had little means to purchase one as tubs cost upwards of $10, decided they wanted to debate out of expando files like they had in middle school. Their plan was to get some expando files from their middle school coach, but as freshmen they did not have a way to meet up with their previous coach as they were too young to drive and their parents either only had one car or worked long hours. At CUDL, we had hundreds and hundreds of expando files so I brought some to Carlos and Joseph. Upon seeing the expando files, Benicia said to Joseph and Carlos, "At Dewey, we don't use expandos, we use tubs." This did not deter Joseph and Carlos; they used their expando files to organize their evidence and were happy with the results. I do not think Carlos and Joseph knew

that they were violating a John Dewey norm and that this norm was one that was important to follow. Also, I do not think they even considered that they might be doing something that would be frowned upon because they were just storing their evidence in the way they had been taught in middle school. However, the other team members took their "violation" as an affront to the aesthetics John Dewey wished to represent when they attended tournaments—laptops or tubs. Laptops or tubs were deemed the professional way to appear at tournaments. In the end, without any confrontations that I am aware of, Joseph and Carlos started using a tub after the second tournament. I am suspicious that Mrs. Taylor might have bought them the tub.

By providing the expandos to Joseph and Carlos, I have to acknowledge that I intervened in this situation. As the researcher, I have to take stock of how my behaviors affect the scene. In this case, I supplied Joseph and Carlos with the expandos, which helped them break a team norm. It was not my intent to help them to rebel; my goals were to help them out. Joseph and Carlos seemed a bit lost, and I thought having the expando files might help them engage with a familiar way of handling evidence that would then let them make forward progress. I also wanted to communicate to them that I supported them and since this was the very beginning of the semester, I wanted to make our initial contacts positive. I was laying a foundation of positive interactions with Joseph and Carlos so that when it came time for observations at tournaments and interviews, we would have enough rapport between us that they would agree to participate more deeply. I also did something similar for Xavier and his partner by bringing them a tub.

Another team norm was that the debate team typically dressed up for

tournaments. At suburban and private school tournaments, the debaters dress up in suits or nice dresses. CUDL, knowing the demographics of its students, does not require students to dress up. Students may wear any type of attire. Despite the "come as you are" emphasis, there are still a few schools at CUDL tournaments that like to dress up in professional clothing. John Dewey is one of those teams.

John Dewey's debate team is a mix of social classes and typically those debaters of higher class or higher authority like the team captains, Benicia and Carminda, would decide if the team would dress up, which was pretty much every tournament. In my field notes, I recorded no verbal push back to this decision. The rationale for dressing up was that the judges would find them more credible because dressing up made them look professional. When the first tournament rolled around, most of the team dressed up which meant young men in dress slacks, a button down shirt, a jacket or tie or both and for young women it meant a dress. Joseph showed up in a button down shirt and khaki shorts. Benicia was not pleased and confronted him. Joseph told her he liked shorts and did not have any dress pants. Joseph continued to wear a button down shirt and shorts to the first two tournaments. But since he did so, the other debaters came up with a nickname for him—"Shorts." They started calling Joseph "Shorts" and stopped using his given name.

Joseph was really embarrassed and upset about the nickname. But at the next tournament, he showed up in a full suit with a tie, jacket and matching dress pants. Everyone seemed impressed, but what they did not know was that previous to wearing this suit, Joseph did not have any dress pants and his family could not afford to purchase any. The suit he wore was actually his grandfather's. Joseph wore that suit to every

tournament including both days of the two-day tournaments. One might think that his compliance with the team norm would make people stop calling him "Shorts," but one would be wrong. The nickname stuck despite his acquiescence.

Violating the group norms of the John Dewey debate team happened infrequently. Carminda explained that in the past the cohesion of the team had been stronger. There were unspoken norms of behavior that had rarely been challenged so much so no one in their interviews could really identify more than a few common behaviors. Carminda expressed that the previous captains kept such a tight rein on the debaters that there were not any opportunities for disruption. Unfortunately for Carminda and Benicia, this year's captains, the team norms that had been in place were challenged several times as described above and below.

The norms John Dewey has for storage of data materials and the dress and appearance of the debaters are very similar to a hidden curriculum (Giroux, 1983). Like the hidden curriculum, John Dewey's debate team has unstated norms that are transmitted to the team through the underlying rules that are designed to routinize behavior. The newer students were unaware of these norms until they broke them and the disciplinary measures ensued like name calling. However, the behaviors of Carlos and Joseph do not have to be read as violations of the hidden curriculum; they can also be interpreted as oppositional microbehaviors that offered their own set of potentially new norms that might, if taken up and over time, dislodge the current norms of the team. By using expandos and not dressing up, Carlos and Joseph went against the team norms, especially in regard to the expando files, where they were quite insistent that they use what they liked to organize their core files. In the following example, the novices extend their

oppositional behaviors and create a site for resistance.

Another example of stepping outside the team norms occurred when Carlos, Joseph, Xavier, and Jose started playing a card game, called Yu-Gi-Oh! during class in between the long gaps between tournaments. As described by Xavier, Yu-Gi-Oh! is a game with duel monsters. The goal is to get the opponent's life points to zero, starting at what is typically 4,000 points. The game consists of several card types such as magic, trap, and monster cards. You have to strategically combine all three cards to beat your opponents. I observed Carlos, Joseph, Xavier, and Jose play this game many times, and it is the most confusing game I have ever witnessed. I could never figure out the goal let alone the sequence of cards and the lingo that they used.

The four debaters started playing Yu-Gi-Oh! any chance they got because a) they used core files so they had no research to do and b) their next tournament was over a month and a half away. They took the card game very seriously. Jose even paid me money to order him new cards off my Amazon Prime account so he would not have to pay for shipping. However, the older debaters were deeply annoyed by the game playing because not only did it mean the young men were not prepping for the upcoming debate, they were also engaging in an activity that did not resonate well with older students. The more experienced debaters teased the four for playing the game because they felt it was a sign of immaturity. One senior debater said, "That game is for kids."

The card playing drove Carminda and Benicia crazy because they had the CUDL championship tournament coming up so they had to prep every day and seeing their teammates not prepping made them angry. Benicia and Carminda yelled at the four young men almost every day to prep for their own debate. So the four of them would act

like they were prepping, but then break out the cards towards the end of class. One day, Benicia sprung quickly and stole the cards and held them hostage. She threatened to destroy them! The four of them begged her not to and promised not to play again. She gave the cards back, but about a week later they started playing again much to everyone's dismay.

The card playing set Carlos, Xavier, Joseph, and Jose apart from the rest of the team because they engaged in an activity that no one before them had ever done. There was no script for how to handle this situation so it was immediately interpreted as negative and outside the norm of the team. Who plays a Japanese collectible card game in a debate class? This situation is an example of a clash over what is considered the "proper identity" of a debater. Benicia and Carminda as well as the juniors and seniors saw the proper identity of a debater as one who prepares for tournaments or at least keeps quiet and gossips until they leave class early as most of the juniors and seniors did. These were seen as acceptable behaviors under the definition of what a proper John Dewey debater identity was. However, Carlos, Joseph, Xavier and Jose had a different sense of what was appropriate behavior during down time when they were supposed to be prepping. Instead of gossiping through the class which did not interest them and leaving early which they could not do because they were mainly underclassman, the four of them decided that playing a card game would be the most interesting way to pass the time. Their card playing established an identity of fun and carefreeness, which directly contradicts the proper identity of a debater, set by the older students, specifically Carminda and Benicia.

The card playing was a clear oppositional behavior that developed out of a need to

pass the time because the four young men had little to prep for towards the end of the season because they already knew their evidence because of the use of core files. Since they were not prone to gossip, playing a game helped pass the time and kept them entertained. Their game playing existed in opposition to the juniors and seniors gossiping. It also served as a site of resistance where appropriate behaviors were re-conceptualized by Joseph, Carlos, Xavier, and Jose.

In Chapter 9 a description was offered of John Dewey's debater identity and how it was built upon commonalities and shared goals, and history. The debaters shared what it felt like to be an official debater and how debate gave them an opportunity to express themselves. Also, the winning legacy of John Dewey helped define a debater identity for them. However, these commonalities did not necessarily explain all the acceptable normative behaviors for John Dewey debaters. The confusion over the violation of these norms led to tensions between primarily the juniors and seniors and the novice debaters. The new students to the team felt that they were official John Dewey debaters once they were in the debate class and had received their core files. It had not been made clear to them that there was a proper debate identity that John Dewey sought to uphold. The use of expando files and exceptions to the appropriate dress code led to minor conflicts. Card playing as a means to pass the time instead of gossiping was also deemed unacceptable. For an activity that the participants claimed let them express themselves, there were a lot of unspoken rules that prevented this.

Urban Schools versus Suburban/Private Schools

The John Dewey debaters experienced an interesting tension between being members of CUDL and attending outside suburban/private school run debate

tournaments. Most of the schools that debate for CUDL solely debate for CUDL, but there are a few teams that go to outside tournaments to measure their skills against suburban and private schools. John Dewey is bombarded with opportunities to debate outside of CUDL because it is surrounded by four suburban/private schools with active debate teams. In my field notes, there are many references to what private/suburban teams provide for their teams and what CUDL does not provide. For example, most private/suburban schools provide students with laptops or the debaters have laptops so they do not debate with any paper, most give some type of school blazer or jacket to be worn with their formal dress clothes, and most have large debate budgets, which let them debate more frequently and they sometimes even fly to out of state tournaments and their coaches were typically formerly successful experienced debaters at the high school and national level.

In the case of John Dewey High School, Carminda and Benecia have laptops, which they purchased themselves, while everyone else uses the core files CUDL provides, their coach is inexperienced in her knowledge of debate so Carminda and Benicia teach the other students to debate, and there is no budget for debate. The school provides no funding. Despite the lack of funding, CUDL was able to sponsor John Dewey's attendance at the Holyoke tournament, a private/suburban school, about midway through the debate season. After the tournament, where everyone who participated lost badly, I asked the debaters to talk about some of similarities and differences between their experiences debating at Holyoke versus CUDL.

Carlos thought that both types of schools have the desire to win, but he also believed the suburban/private schools like Holyoke as well as Parkside and Saint Paul

were more prepared because they had more sources of evidence. Carlos was quick to point out that "It doesn't mean we're worse than them, but they usually have a bigger preparedness then we do." Joseph on the other hand did not think CUDL debaters had the same reputation as private/suburban schools because of a lack of money and resources. Joseph explained that, "some people thought more of Holyoke because they had money."

Joseph and Carlos debated at Holyoke, where they painfully lost round after round after round. Finally, in round five, they won on a technicality, a technicality that the judge had to explain to them. Their final standing was 1 in 4. It was demoralizing for them and Carlos and Joseph expressed that they liked CUDL tournaments more because it is more of an even playing field.

Xavier expressed sadness over losing at the Holyoke tournament, but explained that the reason for his losing was based on money. He stated,

> A lot of it comes down to money…One it depends upon how much money the school has to fund debate whether you can all get laptops or not; Two is the people, the quality of the people—whether or not they're good or wide variety or range. I feel like in the other schools, they're a bit more selective—they get the wide variety of range and then they pick. And third, they can afford to do more tournaments then we do in a year. They do 1 or 2 every month.

Xavier identifies the most basic difference between debate in urban debate leagues and private/suburban schools—money. But it's not just the disparity of money between CUDL and suburban/private schools, it is also the capital or privileges the private/suburban school teams possess. This capital affords private/suburban schools better reputations, more opportunities, better qualified debaters, more successes and most importantly to CUDL students, more resources.

Carminda's answer also detailed the attitudes and actions of CUDL debaters

versus private/suburban school debaters. She explained,

> I think the image of a CUDL debater can be different from those [private/suburban schools] because those schools don't have as much fun as we do, and I know that sounds kind of cheesy, but it's like I don't think they are as friendly with each other as we are and so close-knit, where we all really get along and that's the cool part. To compare it to like the Holyoke, St. Paul and Parkside debaters, I've seen where they act as if 'we're just here to debate we're not here to talk.' They are like, 'I just want to win,' and I think that's what makes a difference because the thing with CUDL is we don't see losing as a bad thing. What I'm trying to say that if you do lose you're not bashed, you're not like, 'Oh I've done so bad.' You're like, 'Okay this is where you can do better next time.' And, I think when it comes to those more competitive schools like Holyoke, St. Paul and Parkside, they're more like, 'Oh you lost you suck, you lost you're a bad debater' and that's what I don't like about it.

Carminda's answer was given in hindsight after she had won a few tournaments and was feeling secure in her abilities as a debater. She points out that the level of competition is so high for the private/suburban students that it is treated as a zero sum event—winning is everything and losing is unacceptable. This is similar to Mrs. Taylor's attitude regarding winning at all costs, but in this instance Carminda and even Xavier to an extent forgot that attitude. In fact, Carminda goes on to describe how the teams are less friendly and how they treat one another if they lose. She emphasizes that CUDL does not demonstrate these types of behaviors, that the schools and debaters are friendly and that losing is an opportunity to learn. Carminda participated in the Holyoke tournament and lost, but she was unphased by her losses because she went in knowing she would lose.

The presence of outside tournaments and private/suburban schools has created tensions for John Dewey High School debaters (and a few other CUDL teams) because when they step outside of CUDL many of them immediately feel a sense of lack—a lack of resources, money, capital, preparation, etc. It is easy in this situation to make comparisons to CUDL and list out all of the things CUDL does not provide, which in my field notes I have documented occurred with some frequency. However, CUDL treats

debate as fun and the students are a close-knit community, which they do not associate with private/suburban schools. So while CUDL is criticized, it is also praised.

Xavier's comments about money and the capital suburban/private schools have act like a mirror that reflects all of the resources CUDL does not provide. This leads to criticisms of CUDL and for some, a longing to have the privileges the private/suburban debaters have. Who would not want to debate from a laptop, wear expensive clothes, travel to other states, and win multiple awards? John Dewey debaters are particularly susceptible to this way of thinking not only because of the physical location of their school as mentioned, but also because as CSD students they know the reputation of their school district and consistently experience what it feels like to go without resources and privileges. Moreover, poverty is a material reality for many of the students so the lack of resources is something they deal with every day. Still, it is difficult to see the success of other debaters, especially private/suburban schools, knowing that the identity they represent is largely unobtainable.

On the other hand, in CUDL everyone debates regardless of experience and resources; it is not exclusionary toward anyone. Carminda articulates this best when she compares and contrasts the behaviors between CUDL and the schools like Holyoke, Parkside, and Saint Paul as being closed off and negative whereas CUDL is warm and positive. Joseph and Carlos also indicate that CUDL is better for them. This immediate acceptance creates an open space for students to try out and develop their own debater identity.

The origin of the conflict many of the John Dewey students struggle against deals with the clash between the debater identities and CUDL identity they have developed and

divisions in social class. Suburban schools are surrounded by affluent neighborhoods so they are better funded while private schools receive endowments for the sole purpose of supporting debate. Not only are the schools better funded, but also so are the students. Suburban students live a very different life than urban students and their parents typically have more disposable income, which can be used to support their child's needs for debate. Students from private schools have similar experiences, but one must keep in mind that the student's parents are paying for their child to attend that particular school so there is always money coming into the school. Most of the focus for CUDL debaters is on the resources suburban/private schools provide. Having that laptop and access to research is a stumbling block for a lot of the CUDL debaters because they wish they could have the same. The suburban/private school debaters also are afforded more respect because of the materials they have and that respect is also something a CUDL debater desires. The suburban and private school debaters also demonstrate attitudes of entitlement that come from winning a lot of tournaments. While Carminda explains this away by theorizing that CUDL debaters are nicer and more close-knit, this does not change the class differences between CUDL and suburban/private schools.

What is interesting to me is that none of the debaters who attended the tournament mentioned race as a difference between suburban/private schools and urban. From my field notes, I documented seeing five students of color from other teams; the rest of the students, with the exception of John Dewey, were White. I do not know if this is just an obvious observation and that the students find it typical or if it goes unmentioned for some other reason. As presented in Chapter 4, Wise (2011) argues debate emanates Whiteness and White privilege in part because debate is so expensive as well as an elite

practice.

The lack of underrepresented populations at the Holyoke tournament would seem to be a racialized issue in addition to a class one, but there are no data to support that the participants experienced the tournament through a racialized lens. Attending the Holyoke tournament brought multiple identities together such as the identity of a CUDL debater and those of private/suburban debaters. The goal might be to suture these two identities together so that UDL debaters could participate in two worlds—the CUDL world of debate and the private/suburban world of debate. This suturing of identities could cross cut class and racial differences. But the John Dewey debaters mainly rejected the identities that private/suburban debate affords. Instead, it is through difference that the CUDL debaters came to define their identities and social positions. Without difference, one cannot discover who you are because it is through difference that the discovery comes (Hall, 1991). The John Dewey debaters discovered all the things they did not have influenced their identities in relation to what the suburban/private debaters did have. There is a lack—a lack of money, resources, affluence of social class that defines CUDL debaters no matter the context. It is just more pronounced in a private/suburban school tournament setting.

A Class Divided

In my observations, the debaters in Mrs. Taylor's classroom physically divided themselves by year in school and debate, but these divisions also divided the classroom by race and social class. Mrs. Taylor's classroom is divided into two sides of desks with a wide margin of space between the two sides. The two sides face each other. My field notes show repeated questioning of the division of where students sat. On the right side

of the classroom, the juniors and seniors sat together often in one large group so they could gossip. The students who sat on this side were made up of junior varsity and varsity debaters. The three junior varsity teams and one varsity team were all White except for one Hispanic student. Carminda floated from side to side so I did not count her in these tallies. On the left side of the classroom sat all the freshmen, plus one sophomore and one junior all of whom were novice debaters. Interestingly, seven of the novice debaters were Hispanic and one, Joseph, was White.

The two sides of the classroom rarely interacted. In fact, one of the White senior debaters refused to even acknowledge the Hispanic debaters unless it was to make fun of them. He often made racist comments and told racist jokes. Early on in the semester, I witnessed the older debaters "hazing" the incoming freshman by calling them "Fish." Once, the same White debater told Joseph and Carlos to stay on their side of the room because they "stunk like fish." This student created an environment of hostility when he was in the classroom, which was not often because Mrs. Taylor let him leave class early; he always had some excuse so that he could leave.

On closer examination, I also found the debaters to be divided by social class. This may be because all the White students sat on one side of the room and they came from affluence and almost all the students on the left side were Hispanic and did not come from affluence, which was discussed as part of our interviews. I asked Carminda about the racial divisions in the class and she said that the divisions were not racial, but based on the student's level in school; therefore, all the juniors sat together and the seniors and then all the freshman sat together and so on and so forth. But there is a problem with her explanation. If the students were divided by grade level in school then

why didn't Xavier and Jaquelina sit on the opposite side of the room with all the White students? And why was there this never-ending feeling of tension between the two sides of the room? My field notes consistently documented the tension that I felt.

The division in Mrs. Taylor's class reflects the deeper divisions in the school as a whole. In an interview with Xavier, he laid out how the school was segregated. He started with announcing, "There is racial segregation at our school," and went on to explain,

> In the cafeteria, the White people sit by the door and then the Mexicans sit in the middle and the black people on the sides. And then there are exceptions like a Hispanic will be sitting with the White people. But the Mexicans, well the Hispanics and the Blacks are more socially integrated with one another because the Whites are bit more elitist.

I asked if there were different groups within this racial breakdown and Xavier explained that the thespians were mostly White and the cheerleaders were all White except for one Black girl and one Hispanic. The drill team is almost all Hispanic with a few Black girls, but no White girls. I asked why this division existed and Xavier said because White girls stick to cheer, but he also said he thought it was cultural because dance is integral in the Hispanic culture. I asked if there were different groups amongst the Hispanics and Blacks, and Xavier then started to talk about the gangsters and cholos. He explained that many of them did not try in school and dropped out. He explained,

> There's the Northsiders and the Northsiders are like most of the people from our school and then there are Southsiders and they just hate each other same as the Blood and Crips situation. The Southsiders wear blue and Northsiders are red.

Xavier did not reference a lot of violence associated with the gang members.

Another important topic came up as he was describing the racial and social dynamics of John Dewey and that was how the divisions in the school also revealed differences in socioeconomic status. Xavier explained that students of color with less

money do not sit with White people and the White students who do not have as much money do not sit with the White elites either. The White elites are the jocks, cheerleaders, and rich kids.

Xavier is the only participant to acknowledge the racial and class segregation at John Dewey. In my interviews, I asked all the participants if they had ever been discriminated against and while all of them said yes and several teachers and students were mentioned, but no one mentioned John Dewey High School. Xavier's response was prompted when I asked him to describe the student body at Dewey. I had not shared with him my findings about his classroom, but we had talked about several students in the debate class that he found to be racist and appalling.

Mrs. Taylor's classroom was a microcosm of the larger student body in terms of segregation by race and class. While the debaters in Mrs. Taylor's class may have chosen to sit with other students from the same grade level, the choice of where they sat and whom they included was not innocent. There was clear segregation by race and class in the room. There was also an underlying current of tension on a daily basis, especially if the White, male student who made racist jokes was in the classroom that particular day. This is why my field notes are littered with questions and comments about what I was seeing and feeling because the divisions were so obvious at first that I doubted what I saw and felt. But after a year in the field with these students, I know for a fact that these divisions existed and were maintained.

The segregation of the debaters and the school as a whole represent the disciplinary technologies schools and students create in order to maintain domination or at the very least the status quo. The older debaters disciplined the younger through

speech acts such as labeling and name calling, gossiping or direct denigration of the novice debaters. They also enforced spatial territories for where certain students were allowed and not allowed to enter or sit. Furthermore, the social stratification in the class added to a series of tensions. High schools are hierarchical in the way they recognize and label students of different years in school, i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior. The debaters were also stratified by year in debate, but the most influential stratification was by race and social class. The White students, who represented some of the more experienced debaters (Benicia and Carminda, both Hispanic, were exceptions to this pattern), and possessed the most wealth, were at the top of the hierarchy while the novices, and Hispanic students were at the bottom. This stratification reinforced the production and reproduction of societal structures.

Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede!

As noted in Chapter 9, participation in debate somehow motivated students to become more involved in other academic activities. While mainly the White students held positions on Student Council or Executive Board, some of the other students started to push at this boundary. For instance, Xavier decided to run for the Executive Board. His decision to do this brought together his academic and racial identities.

Xavier was already involved in school activities. He was a staff reporter for the school newspaper and a member of the literary club. But midway through the debate season, he decided he wanted to run for Executive Board. Executive Board is panel of students elected by the student body to plan events that raise money for each class level; some of those events included putting on a zombie walk, planning dances, and selling mums. Students, who wanted to be on the board, had to campaign to get votes.

Historically, the Executive Board has been comprised of popular White students. There has been little diversity on the board.

Xavier decided to campaign for the position of Secretary and he put up posters like everyone else and tried to talk to people about voting for him. He found that most of the people he spoke with were going to vote for his opponent who was White. That is when Xavier got the idea to campaign to the Hispanic students in his school since they outnumber the White students. Hispanic students did not typically vote in these types of elections; it was mainly just White students, according to Xavier. However, Xavier felt that if he galvanized enough Hispanic students to vote he could be elected so he started targeting the Hispanic students during their lunch hours.

Xavier marched around the cafeteria yelling,

> Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede!" "Don't you want to be represented?" "Don't you want some brown on our Executive Board? Don't you want some color? Then vote for me, Xavier!" "Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede! Sí Se Puede!

He would then sit down where the Hispanic students sat and ask them to vote for him so that he could be their representation. His strategy worked as many Hispanic students not only voted, but also voted for him. In the end, Xavier lost the election by less than 10 votes. However, the organizers felt that the vote was so close that Xavier deserved to be on the Executive Board so they created an "Executive Board At Large" position for him. He was incredibly happy and wanted to really celebrate his nomination in debate class, but because one of the White students who was expected to win her position lost, his celebrations were tempered.

Xavier's academic identity reflects his affiliation with practices of schooling through his campaign to join the Executive Board. He is both engaged and emotionally connected to a particular school activity. It is also an example of one's academic

identity. If not for the confidence Xavier gained from debate, I do not think Xavier would have run for Executive Board. I think he would have wanted to, but would not have actually done so because he would have been without the confidence debate instilled in him. Academic identities are inextricably linked with one's racialized identity. Nasir (2012) utilizes the term *racialized identities* to mean that "race is not an inherent category but rather is made racial through social interaction, positioning, and discourse" (p. 5). Xavier uniquely positions his "Hispanicness" in his bid to join the Executive Board. Through his social interactions, he confirms his racial identity and academic identity and uses them both to achieve his goals.

Urban Debaters

After the regular debate season ended, I still conducted observations and interviews for a period of time because two of the John Dewey debaters, Carminda and Benecia, qualified for the National Championships in Washington, DC as was expected. Every week, Carminda and Benicia met with one of the CUDL staff to prepare for the tournament as well as with the other team that qualified. These meetings were much more informal in nature because they were held after school at either the students' schools or at the CUDL offices. These meetings revealed a host of tensions the students were feeling, but the messages were for the most part couched in jokes or texting language. Additionally the term *urban* evolved into many different meanings influencing academic, debater and racial identities.

Carminda explained what the term *urban* meant to her. She explained,

> Well you see I am a part of the Carlinville *Urban* Debate League and I used to be so confused by what that meant. Once again, my vocabulary wasn't that great and so I was really confused by what the entire thing meant. But then as I started talking to people, I was told that urban meant that we were kind of the poor kids

> or don't have as many things as other private schools. To me, it was like urban equals public school. So I was like okay whatever not a big thing, but as you go into your debate career at CUDL, you find that you are missing so many things and what I mean by that is it was sometimes hard to find places to print out copies of evidence and it was sometimes hard to find someone to help me. . . . You start realizing that you can't always get the resources you need so then the idea of like being *urban* pops up a lot.

Carminda's explanation is very interesting. First, she determines that urban stands for poor kids who have less than kids in other schools. But instead of taking offense or really reacting to the label of urban, she just equates being urban to public school. By doing so, Carminda reinvents what urban means and dismisses it as being part of attending a public school as if all public schools are urban. Second, Carminda's long-term participation in CUDL demonstrates a lack of resources, which she then associates with being urban. So in this case, urban means not having the right resources to debate or the help she needs to become a better debater. Third, while it is not described in her quote, at some level she associates race with being urban because she and the other qualifiers use the term to reference race.

As the practices proceeded, the four qualifiers began to tease each other about race and poverty because of the schools they came from and the lack of resources available and began saying #urban after almost everything they said. In this situation, #urban was used as an inside joke amongst the participants. In the meetings, I consistently heard the phrase "#urban." Carminda and Benicia and the two other qualifiers would tease each other about not being *urban* enough. For example, they would make fun of Benicia because of her light eyes and pale skin even though she was Hispanic, and Brian was teased for being White and therefore not *urban* enough to attend the competition. Even the CUDL staff person would engage in this type of talk by telling Carminda and Jacabo to bring Takis and other types of Mexican food because they have

darker skin and eyes, asking Brian to bring his cane so at least he looked handicapped and suggesting Benicia wear a traditional Mexican poncho, all so that they would seem more urban and more Hispanic in the case of Benicia. After taking these jibes at one another, they would all say "#urban" and then laugh. Their conversations were littered with the phrase. In this context, #urban was meant to be a joke about the lack of authenticity as an *urban* debater for two of the debaters, Benicia and Brian, and deepen the authenticity of Carminda and Jacabo so that their "Hispanicness" or "urbanness" would rub off on Benicia and Brian.

However, the term *urban* took on even more meaning when Carminda traveled to the National Championships. Carminda recalls,

> And then at nationals we faced it a lot. It was honestly so frustrating and it's like for the National Urban Organization, you are expecting a lot of kids that are just like you; who do not have the resources and don't always have the help that they need and do not have the support that they need. . . .When we got there, we realized how urban we were. These were kids who maybe they lived in bad neighborhoods, but like they were having all the help they needed and stuff and they were having a lot more things than we had and that was what frustrated us because I didn't think it was fair at all. I didn't think it was a fair fight. Because you wonder what in the world are all these people doing here when you realize that they have paid coaches, they can afford traveling. . . . So I mean honestly what bothered me the most is that these kids wanted to consider themselves urban, but they have so many more advantages than us and so much more help than us and it just confused me because yeah they might, well I don't know them all personally, but from what I saw and what I heard, these kids had it way better than we did. And they kind of offended me because they kept saying, 'I'm so urban,' 'We're so urban.' It sounded like they were kind of being ungrateful and I know that sounds bad, but it was the truth they weren't really seeing how bad some schools actually do have it.

In this scenario, #urban came to mean more than a joke about race and lack of resources. The term *urban* became a living, breathing state of existence. And instead of encountering urban debaters like themselves, they realized that they were the ones who were truly *urban* because they were lacking in any type of privilege that most of the other

teams had. Furthermore, the other teams' claims to being urban greatly bothered Carminda because she did not feel as if she and the CUDL teams were being recognized as truly urban, that is, without resources, opportunities to travel, experienced coaching staff, etc. #urban was no longer a joke but a physical state or identity that could not be laughed off.

Another aspect of being urban that Carminda and the others encountered were the types of *urban* arguments run by many of the teams. They ran critical arguments like antiblackness and black feminism. Some of the level of discomfort Carminda experienced came from the arguments the other teams ran at nationals because Carminda and Benicia were not used to hearing these arguments and the way they were performed. They had little evidence to defend a position within these types of debate rounds. Carminda and Benicia had been taught to argue the topic for that year not theoretical positions on blackness, feminism and so forth. In this case, #urban came to mean again the questioning of one's authenticity as being urban because these were arguments that other urban schools readily understood. Furthermore, #urban also represented the lack of preparation and resources they had to prepare for this type of debate. This lack of preparation directly included the CUDL staff member not preparing the four qualifiers for these types of arguments, especially when he said he would. In general, CUDL lacks a position on critical social issues and the evidence that they do provide students with is often devoid of any critical issue or theory especially regarding race and class.

In contrast, the debate rounds revealed a lack of "urbanness" because Carminda and Benecia were unprepared to interact in an urban debate space. For example, in one round, Benicia was called a "Cracker" by the opposing team, who also kept referring to

them as "White Girls." In another round, they were labeled antifeminist. The term *urban* then took on an additional meaning for Carminda and her partner because no longer was urban about being in a public school or not having enough resources, it became about racial name-calling. So not only were Benicia and Carminda struggling to in this case be more urban in order to understand the arguments, they were at the same time chastised for their lack of "urbanness" through racial epitaphs.

#urban was such an interesting piece of identity work that I followed up with Carminda again early in her freshman year in college. In this conversation, Carminda revealed more of the history as well as how it feels to have been in an urban debate league and now compete on the national college circuit. First, Carminda explained that even before they came up with the term #urban, there was a feeling or recognition that they were viewed as "less of debaters because we come from the 'urban alliances.'" She recalls in her early years of debating for CUDL that neither CUDL nor their individual schools provided buses or transportation to tournaments so the students all had to drive themselves or their coach would rent a van. Carminda reflects, "In that moment, we usually mocked ourselves for not having the normal things. Normal things would of course include transportation, supplies, access to research, experienced debate coaches, a debate budget, etc.

While there was a realization there of being *urban* the term #urban came about when they started prepping for the national tournament and it became particularly meaningful once they arrived at nationals as Carminda iterates earlier. In my follow up with Carminda, she re-emphasized just how *urban* she felt at nationals because most of the "urban" schools had two to three coaches with college debate experience, money to

travel to tournaments outside urban debate league tournaments, exposure to different arguments, etc. There were only a few small schools like CUDL that did not have these types of support and privileges; therefore, #urban became about "how little we had in comparison to everyone else, which made us realize how much better these debaters were than us."

Carminda emphasized strongly that "#urban was never a joke to make fun of others," but she reflected that,

> It might've been used as a joke to make us feel better about ourselves, one could possibly say that, but regardless of how many times we might have joked, the reality of it, at least to me, was very harsh to accept sometimes as it meant, I wasn't as good enough of a debater as the others.

This feeling of being a good enough debater has in some ways followed Carminda to college where she debates on her university's team. Having not traveled to outside tournaments in high school like most of the debaters on the college circuit puts her at a bit of a disadvantage and Carminda feels this. Also when asked by other debaters at national tournaments about her debate background, Carminda says that she is looked down upon when she says she debated for CUDL, which is frustrating because other debaters' derision of UDLS left Carminda feeling inadequate. However, in our follow up conversation, Carminda and her partner Benicia had just come back from their very first college level debate where they placed fourth! Although she has reiterated that she feels less than because of her urban debate background, perhaps it is possible that accomplishments such as this will mend the underlying meaning of #urban.

There are multiple layers of meaning associated with the term #urban. In the beginning, #urban built a bond between the four CUDL debaters as they joked about being from an *urban* debate league; it solidified a collective identity between the four

debaters by acknowledging that the four came from similar backgrounds, i.e., attending CSD and participating in CUDL. After some information was provided to the four qualifiers by the CUDL directors about the types of teams at the national championships and they found out how CUDL would compare to other teams, somehow the phrase turned into a way of teasing one another about their ethnicities or what they labeled as lack of ethnicity. There was pressure to be more urban than they were told or felt. The teasing involved mocking Benicia and Brian about their lack of urbanicity (or their whiteness) and increasing Jacabo and Carminda's established Hispanic ethnicities so that they all would fit in at nationals. The mocking of one another both labeled and stereotyped each of them. And they fully participated in their own stereotyping, sometimes making fun of themselves. It created a situation where the students were participating in their own hegemony. By teasing one another about the stereotypes of their races and how society expects them to look and act, they attempt to make fun of the dominant ideology, but this can also be seen as reinforcing the dominant ideology by succumbing to the artificial social constructs made by the dominant class.

While always described as a joke by the debaters, it is realistic to examine another layer to the use of #urban where the mocking of each other's ethnicities was used as a coping mechanism over the fear of the unknown—the other debaters at nationals. CUDL acts as a bubble for most debaters because most never step outside that bubble, but by attending the national championships, Carminda, Benicia, Jacabo, and Brian were breaking that bubble with little knowledge of what was outside their bubble. They had scant information about what the competition and the participants would be like, but somehow they had already internalized through their use of #urban that they would not

measure up.

Once at nationals and after meeting the other schools and teams, the picture of what *urban* looked like changed for the students. Carminda described this best when she discovered how the other schools debated outside their urban debate league, had budgets to travel and provided resources including the hiring of experienced debate coaches. Another layer of #urban, as witnessed by Carminda and the others, solidified how urban CUDL is because it cannot afford to provide anything for its students like the other urban debate leagues provided for their debaters. This frustrated Carminda because she thought the schools attending would be on an equal playing field and they were not. This defined the CUDL debaters' identities as coming from an impoverished program and one that was unequal to the majority of the other teams. This was Carminda's worst nightmare because the reality of being urban, poor, and disadvantaged infiltrated her thinking.

The final layer of #urban occurred when the term *urban* became about the types of arguments that the other teams made or used. Most of the teams offered kritiks (critiques or arguments and theories of a critical nature) that used racial and feminist theories, which were unknown to Carminda and Benicia and they did not know how to argue against them. The two young women were used to arguing the resolution for that debate season and were not familiar with how the other teams used theory to make different arguments that may not have explained or answered the resolution. Furthermore, being stereotyped as White girls by the other teams and being called racist names angered Carminda and Benicia and also reinforced from what the term *urban* had become at the tournament. The urban arguments that should have been systemic to CUDL were not, and the young women lacked any preparation to deal with such

arguments. This layer really scarred Carminda because she came home from nationals thinking she was a terrible debater and this deeply upset her.

Chapter Summary

Looking at the analysis presented in this chapter and taking into account the research question, I see it as important to point out broader discourses in this conclusion. First, the tension between social class and race were a theme that ran throughout the course of the analysis. From who the students interacted with and did not interact with to how the students arranged themselves in the classroom, as well as the development of the phrase #urban, the participants were engaged in discourses of segregation. Second, Mrs. Taylor's class was a microcosm of the larger social and racial divisions present at John Dewey. These divisions led to both challenges of the status quo such as Xavier's campaign for the Executive Board and the oppositional behaviors #urban encouraged (at first) as well as the playing of the card game to the acquiescence of the normative behaviors of the John Dewey team that the newer debaters conformed to. Third, although there were challenges to the overall White dominance and culture of the team, the oppositional behavior was short lived. The participants wanted the advantages that suburban/private schools possessed and this caused a reinforcement of White privilege. In sum, there were many instances when the participant's debater identities conflicted with social realities in and out of the debate world.

CHAPTER 11

IDENTITIES AND VOICES: COLLIDING, COLLABORATING, OR CO-OPTING?

Reflection

As I look back on this project, I feel a reluctance to end it because I feel I am cutting short and ending the voices of my participants. I want their voices to live on—not be shelved in a library or stored in an electronic file. They are what have carried me through this process of writing my dissertation. My participants are the stars of this show. Coming to this project was a bit of a risk and fraught with obstacles. The idea to do an analysis of an alternative program and examine its influences on students through their voices is an uncommon endeavor. However, I believe I am drawn to these types of projects because of my background of growing up at YMCA camps. YMCA camps serve, in many respects, as an alternative way to learn and a way to learn activities that might not be academic, but build self-confidence and worth. I believe schools should build self-confidence and worth so I am always looking for programs that intervene in the negative processes of schooling.

I came to this project in two ways. First, my participation in a class on feminist pedagogy and the classroom had a guest speaker who came and spoke to us about art in the classroom. I discovered that he ran a program that instituted art in the classroom. I was sold from that moment on. I started research right away and completed a semester

long ethnography. Unfortunately, the director moved on and the next director was not as amenable to my research. I was sorely disappointed, but at least I knew what type of dissertation I wanted to write. The second way I came to this project was through a casual conversation with my advisor who mentioned in passing that there were these urban debate leagues across the country that were having great success with urban youth. She made a comment that I should look it up so eventually I did and I was intrigued. It was another alternative program that worked to help urban youth, a subsection of students very important to me, succeed in school and matriculate to college. As fate would have it, there was an urban debate league in the big inner city I was soon moving to. I made the necessary contacts and after some initial difficulties getting into the site, I began my research. At that time, I had no idea how close I would grow to my primary participants and what a privilege it would be to tell their stories. I did not realize this process would impact me so greatly.

Review

This dissertation started with an examination of debate as an educational practice and how UDLS teach policy debate to urban youth, in large inner cities in the U.S. in an effort to raise students' grades, test scores, graduation rates, etc. Quantitative research has already demonstrated these improvements, but research on urban debate leagues has yet to explore *how* students choose to make these changes. What is it about debate that creates these changes in students? In this study, I make the argument that students' identity or identities are what changes. Therefore, in my research questions I ask:

RQ_1 What identities do students experience through participation in an Urban Debate League?

And because we all have multiple identities that can contradict one another, I also ask:

RQ_2 What tensions exist around the identities experienced through participation in an Urban Debate League and social identities available in the broader culture of the school?

Identity theories became a means for explaining the changes the student's experienced. Because identity is multifaceted, fluid, and relational it helps identify who we are even though we are never just one thing; we are always in process. Identity theory illuminated how students were interpellated into the identities of debaters.

The methods used in this dissertation are a unique combination of portraiture and critical ethnography where portraiture was constructed as the primary data used for analysis. Thus, the data used were mostly made up of negotiated student narratives. Throughout the analysis many themes emerged regarding the identities the students experienced and the tensions created through participation in CUDL.

Preview

I have divided this chapter by research question and for each I present one primary finding for each identity or tension the students experienced, conclude what these findings mean, and make recommendations for future research. I then follow these sections by drawing some broad conclusions and addressing some limitations and lingering questions.

Research Question One

The overall finding for the first research question was that there were multiple identities offered though the UDL program, specifically three—a debater identity, an academic identity, and a CUDL identity.

Debater Identity

The debater identity illustrated the multifaceted nature of debate and debating. It demonstrated that debate is more than just an elocutionary activity that students participate in; it constitutively shapes and is shaped by the participants. Students took up a debater identity in multiple ways, but the most important finding was that the students saw debate as a form of self-expression. Even with the use of core files, the participants believed that debate gave them the ability to express themselves in ways they had not experienced before. I determined this to be the most important finding because self-expression is a part of building one's identity/identities.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from this finding. First, the structure of the activity matters little to the students as long as they were able to speak and be heard. Therefore, the highly structured nature of policy debate with all of its formalities does not impede students from feeling like they have a voice and that their opinions matter. Second, the participant's strong emphasis on the importance of being able to speak and be heard reveals just how little schools allow for these types of behaviors. The hidden curriculum and disciplinary technologies and speech acts erase any type of voice a student may have because it is through these practices that the behaviors of students are conceptualized (Davidson, 1996). Third, I believe participation in debate can be read as a set of oppositional behaviors because students bring their voices back to their classrooms, utilize their debate knowledge to assist them with their school work, and their debater identities do not allow practices of schooling to limit their identities by silencing them. Future research should examine debaters outside their debate class and in the context of other classrooms to document how students utilize

facets of their debater identities, particularly to assess how they engage in self-expression.

Academic Identity

The participants' articulations of debate as a form of social mobility are the most important finding. Joseph and Carminda are the two greatest examples of this determination. For example, Joseph conveys a very linear description of social mobility which includes: 1) debate increases your grades; 2) debate will lead to college scholarships; 3) the scholarships will pay for college; 4) college completion will allow you to choose the right job; 5) happiness will ensue because your job allows you to do things that you like. On the other hand, Carminda's experiences demonstrated that she was not physically and emotionally invested in school her freshman and sophomore year even though she was a debater. Debate was the only tie she had to school; otherwise she might have disappeared into the abyss of students who do not care about school or grades, a large population that exists at John Dewey. However, debate became a motivating factor her junior and senior year when she realized college was an option for her. She worked so hard at school and graduated in the top 10% of her class. Like Joseph, her debate experience and the offer of a debate scholarship were key factors in her ability to attend college.

The conclusions one can draw from these examples are one, that debate raises the bar in how students see their futures. Two, graduating from high school is no longer the immediate goal or milestone; it is more important to go on to college. Three, debating is the key to social mobility; without debate the students may not have a chance to go to college and then move up in the world because they have a degree. Future research

should investigate how and why students who become urban debaters believe so heavily that debate is the means to get into college and have a better life.

CUDL Identity

The CUDL organization is responsible for sending messages about what it values; however, in my interviews none of the students really described what those values were. They did describe how CUDL operated and categorized other debaters in the program. In this case, it is difficult to choose what the most important finding is because neither really captures an identity without the other. The CUDL identity is defined by how it holds its tournaments and by the debaters who participate in the program.

The conclusion to be drawn from the CUDL identity is that students experienced dialectical tensions between needing predictability in how a tournament runs and the uncertainty of what will happen in a debate round to maintain excitement. The other debaters and their teams demonstrate a level of difference in their debate styles, but are similar in their backgrounds because they attend the same school district. Therefore, students described needs for both predictability and uncertainty and difference and similarity to help define their identities as debaters. Further research should investigate the ways CUDL instills certain values in its debaters. What are the specific discourses used to shape students and how do they identify these messages?

Research Question Two

The findings for the second research question stem from the tensions the students experienced as a result of their participation in a UDL. There were five areas of tension experienced by the participants: team norm violations, the structures of the John Dewey classroom and school, urban schools versus a private or suburban school, and the labeling

of participant's as urban. The finding that illustrates the most important tensions is the labeling of students as urban or #urban.

#urban represented a lot of different tensions including feelings about a lack of resources, measuring the lack of one's "urbanness," feeling urban in an urban environment, lacking urban knowledge, and dealing with multiple interpretations of the urban label. #urban started out as a joke about the lack of resources CUDL has and also as a way to measure if one was urban enough to attend the championships. Three of the finalists were Hispanic, but only two of them looked traditionally Hispanic and the fourth finalist was a White male. The four made jokes about how to get one to look more Hispanic and to portray the White male as disabled because previously in the season he had surgery and needed a cane to walk. The goal was to make them seem more urban than they felt they looked. #urban remained a joke until they reached the competition where they discovered how *urban* their team was due to a lack of training and resources. Furthermore, once they started debating Carminda found she lacked urban knowledge about racial and gender theories and discovered she was not recognized as being urban as she was referred to as a White girl several times in a debate round.

A couple of conclusions can be drawn from this finding. First, when used as a joke about lacking urbanness, I find this similar to the situation where Benicia and Carminda were labeled bitchy and started calling each other bitchy as a way to jokingly deal with the label. But instead of being a joke, they were actually reinscribing the very behaviors for which they were called bitchy. Making fun of Benicia's lack of looking like the stereotypical Hispanic and making Brian out to be disabled reinscribed their lack of urbanness. The reinscription of these types of behaviors exudes Whiteness as Wise

(2011) theorized. By attempting to make themselves more urban, they reinforced stereotypes of how Whites have constructed what it means to be or look urban.

A second conclusion involves the use of the term *urban* and how it applied to Carminda. First, the CUDL staff pumped up the finalists by telling them that they could compete with the oldest and typically best urban debate leagues. This reinforced the idea to the finalists that they were well prepared and would measure up. They would not be so *urban* even though they were being pushed to look that way. Upon arrival at the competition and throughout their debate rounds, Carminda experienced a lack of being urban because she did not have experience with racial and gender theories that were a part of the other teams and leagues demonstrations of urbanicity. This left her feeling more and less urban at the same time because she clearly did not have experience with urban arguments and yet this lack of experience stemmed from CUDL's diminished resources. Thus, being *urban* had a double meaning that was confusing for Carminda because on the one had she was being coached to be more urban and on the other, she was experiencing what she defined as what it was actually like to be urban. Carminda was caught between the construction of urbanicity through Whiteness and through her own experiences. Future research should explore more deeply what the label of *urban* means to students and how they construct themselves as a result of this term. How does labeling students as urban influence their identities and/or help them construct an urban identity?

Broad Conclusions

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research for each research question have been identified. But there are still some broader conclusions to be

made including the development of different identities, the use of oppositional behaviors when faced with the status quo, segregation of John Dewey and the debate classroom, and the mixing of methodologies.

First, this dissertation sets forth the argument that the development of different identities through debate is a potential change for students from just existing in their school to succeeding at it. Demonstrating how schools are sites of socialization that limit student identities as well as setting forth poststructural conceptions of identities that open up possibilities for multiple and contradictory identities are a key aspect of this project. Many previous studies have started from the negative effects of schooling on students from underrepresented communities and then moved to how their programs have great positive impacts. But what they often fail to explain is how the students engage in this change. Theorizing that students are interpellated into a debater identity begins to explain how students make this change and allows for multiple identities and contradictory ones to be held together by the participants.

Second, the oppositional behaviors the students sometimes engaged in helped to challenge the status quo of what debaters should or should not look like and how they should behave or not behave. The participants came to identify the status quo when they debated outside of CUDL as well as when they attended CUDL tournaments; they also discovered how some behaviors were acceptable to the team and some were not. In many cases, the students pushed back at the status quo, but also fell victim to it when they acquiesced to John Dewey norms of behavior or when they yearned for the benefits suburban/private high schools have.

Third, another important finding was the depth of segregation in the debate team

and in the school at large. If it were not for Xavier, this may never have come to light. The segregation of the school was important to establish because it showed how the team was a microcosm of the larger school. Examining Mrs. Taylor's classroom as a microcosm of the school demonstrated the tensions between student's academic identities and social identities. For instance, the explanation of overall school segregation explained the divisions in Mrs. Taylor's class and why that class was always so tense and uncomfortable. Not only were debater identities in conflict, but so were issues of race and class.

Finally, the mixing of methodologies was a particularly effective and interesting way of treating the data. In most ethnographies, researchers use some form of grounded theory to analyze their results, which is often confusing, reduces the data to codes and concepts, and often disassociates the data from its original context. Using portraiture allowed for the creation of student portraits that were rich with student experiences and language. They were also co-negotiated with the participants so efficacy was established through a particular means of member checking the data. The most important aspect of mixing these methodologies is that student voices were held at the center of the research. Too little research acknowledges student voices and legitimates them. In this study, students' voices permeate the data honoring their experiences and opinions.

Acknowledging Limitations

With any research project, there are always some limitations to the study. Typical limitations to a qualitative study include researcher bias, lack of generalizability, volume of data makes analysis time consuming, maintenance of rigor, lack of credibility in the scientific community, etc. However, most qualitative researchers know the limitations of

this type of research before they begin so I am largely unaffected by these limitations because I have either incorporated or acknowledged them.

There are two aspects of this study that I would argue could be limitations of the project. They are very similar. First, John Dewey High School is considered to be one of the best high schools in the urban district of CSD. By working with this school, I question if I potentially skewed my results to include more privileged students? My answer is yes and no. Yes, I had students who had more opportunities to take AP classes and yes, I had some more economically privileged students in the debate class because of the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods. However, I did not work closely with any of the economically privileged students. They did not want to be full participants in the study. Instead of skewing the results of the study, the differences in economic privilege caused tensions in the class, which became important to my study because it reflected larger societal problems.

The second limitation is that none of my primary participants was part of the economically privileged students in the debate class; therefore, I do not have a conflicting voice as a primary participant. I would have been interested in how that particular student saw debate, Mrs. Taylor's classroom, oppositional behaviors or challenges to the status quo, and their social identities versus debater and academic identities. However, I do have descriptions of the economically privileged students' behaviors in class and at debate tournaments because of my observations and their agreement to participate minimally. Their voices while not specifically attached to a name are very much present in the research.

Lingering Questions and Future Directions

Several questions linger for me about this project and I also have ideas for future directions of subsequent studies based on these questions. First, as a communication education scholar, I wonder how this project could restart conversations about identity. Since the 2003 special issue on identity by *Communication Education,* there has been a dearth of discussion about identity and therefore, I would like to see two things happen. First, I would like to see a set of questions and agenda created for the study of identity in classrooms. Much like Sprague (1992, 1993a) sets an agenda for studying Instructional Communication and Communication Education, a plan should be outlined for studying identity through the lens of communication education. Second, I wish that critical cultural scholars, critical cultural education scholars, and communication education scholars would collaborate together to enrich the study of identity in classrooms. I would like to see communication education scholars utilize critical cultural theories of identities and critical cultural scholars study the classroom in a more localized manner. Critical cultural education scholars should expand beyond prolific scholars like Giroux and McLaren and again work at the localized level. There needs to be a commitment to studying the classroom through both a critical cultural and a communication education lens. Future studies should be a collaborative effort to enrich identity studies and theories for students in classrooms.

Another lingering question I have is about the theory of academic identity. Although I used it to describe affiliation with school practices (Nasir & Saxe, 2003) and Nasir (2012) expands this theory to examine learner and racial identities together, I am still left wondering how this theory can be used to describe a nuanced set of student

practices in classrooms and schools. I would like to see academic identity be theorized similar to how Delgado-Bernal (2001) develops identities of home. In her article, she demonstrates how Latina women can bring what they have learned at home to the classroom. Therefore, I ask, "How can academic identity be theorized in such a way that it is descriptive and predictive of how students take up practices of schooling?" In the future, I hope to see academic identities inclusive of what is already theorized today, but also developed into a coherent and cohesive theory that can be used to describe students' identities as result of their schooling.

Finally, and this is a question I am left with often, why does research or do researchers not legitimate student voices? It is similar to the question, why does our government not utilize teachers' voices and experiences in forming education policies and programs? School is what happens to students and they should be the best source about these happenings because it's their bodies that are being imprinted upon. Students have opinions about school and schooling, why not break through the hierarchical structures that delegitimate and dismiss them as being too young, too inexperienced, or too immature in their thinking? Kindergarteners have opinions about school and should someone sit down and listen to them, one might find out how certain practices of schooling affect them. It is so problematic for me that student voices are left out of most research when they are the subjects being investigated. A study by Villaseñor et al. (2013) demonstrates how to involve Latino youth in both the making of policy decisions and publishable research. The students' voices were not ignored and were an integral part of the research process. Future research needs to validate students' voices as being important to research and the drawing of conclusions about them. Students need to be

recognized as more than just a cog in a wheel, but as living, breathing, intelligent, and discerning individuals capable of voicing their experiences and opinions.

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